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Translator's Note

This translation of Syed Sulaiman Nadwi's "Khutbat-e-Madras" is dedicated to the western world in particular and all users of English language in general. It is a well acknowledged fact that the western world has generally shown a hostile attitude towards Islam. But that attitude is now showing visible signs of change. Although Islam is still being portrayed by the western media as a threat and 'extremist fundamentalism", in the words of the of the Reader's Digest it is "the world's fastest growing religion." Many prominent social and political leaders of the western world have begun to admit the importance of Islam for humanity and that there is a need to study it impartially and objectively in order to have a greater understanding of Islam and the Muslim world. At this point, it would be logical to say that a proper understanding of Islam can come only through original Islamic sources.

As the readers of this book will notice, an immense amount of literature about the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) is available in different languages of the world besides Arabic. It is our belief that Syed Suleiman Nadwi's 'Khutbat-e-Madras" is, perhaps, the best book to introduce the Prophet of Islam and the message of Islam to the western world. When Syed Sulaiman Nadwi was preparing the material for this book he had in mind basically a non-Arab, non-Muslim audience. He was in a unique position to introduce the Prophet of Islam because he had already co authored a seven-volume biography of the holy Prophet which is highly regarded in the Muslim world for its scholarly merits. Compared to this biography the present book seems like a bottle of perfume extracted from tons of flowers.

Sheikh Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, who is one of the most prominent scholars of Islam at the present time, a teacher, an author and a historian, well known in both the Arab and non-Arab world, says about this book that it is a miracle of scholarship. It was a rare good fortune of this translator to meet Sheikh Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi (who was passing through Al-Khobar on his way back from Makkah) and show this translation to him for his approval. He wrote a very gracious letter from India with his appreciation and comments, some of which might be relevant here:

"…Syed Sulaiman Nadwi's "Khutbat-e-Madras" holds a unique position in the literature about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Without lessening the importance of this valuable treasure which has been produced over the last fourteen centuries, I would like to say that the present world needs a series of articles to explain the universal nature of the message which the holy Prophet's biography extends to all mankind, particularly its

relevance to the complexities of the ever-advancing modern life. It is the need of time that Syed Sulaiman Nadwi's great book should be translated into different languages so that its benefit should reach the whole world. I congratulate you for translating it into English. I pray to Almighty Allah for the success of your effort with the hope that it may kindle the light of faith all over the world…" [Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, Lucknow, India, 24 May, 1996].

In conclusion, I would like to say that Islam, which literally means peace, guarantees a life of peace and prosperity in this temporary world and a life of everlasting peace and joy in the next world. It is a message from Allah, the Creator of man, to man for his eternal success. We hope and pray that Almighty Allah, Most Gracious and Merciful, make this book a means towards understanding this message and grant us His Pleasure and Mercy in this life and the hereafter.

Syed Riazul Hassan
Dammam, Saudi Arabia
30th July, 1996

FOREWORD

The following few lectures about different aspects of the life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) were delivered under the patronage of the Muslim Educational Society of Madras, India, in 1925. For the past few years, it has been a regular practice in Madras that every year some distinguished scholar of Christianity gives lectures on Christianity and Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him), which are received with great interest. This gave the idea to certain well educated Muslims of Madras that a similar attempt should be made for the benefit of the Muslim students of English-medium schools there. Every year, the services of a Muslim scholar should be acquired to give lectures about Islam and the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him), and these lectures should suit the taste of the students of English-medium schools and appeal to the modern mind. Fortunately, Seth M. Jamal Mohammad took upon himself to sponsor these lectures and it is hoped that his good work will continue for a long time to come and this series of the "Islamic Lectures of Madras" will be popular and fruitful.

I feel privileged that I was the first to be chosen for this noble and extremely important task. Eight lectures were held at Laly Hall, Madras, beginning in October, 1925, and were completed in the last week of November. I am grateful to Seth Hameed Hassan, Secretary of the Muslim Education Society, who made all the arrangements, including the announcements and the English translation of these lectures. I am also grateful to the Muslims of Madras for their patient hearing and appreciation of the lectures some of which lasted for nearly three hours. The non-Muslims too, deserve my thanks who in their search for truth attended these meetings despite the fact that Urdu is not their native language. I extend my gratitude to the Urdu and English newspapers of Madras for publishing weekly a summary of my lectures in their columns. Daily Express and The Hindu of Madras deserve a special mention in this regard who generously devoted their columns for the English translation of these lectures.

Finally, while I present these lectures in the written form, I bow my head in humble gratitude to Almighty Allah, asking for His acceptance and Mercy and that He may grant me the sincerity of purpose in presenting this work to the readers.

Seeking Allah's Mercy,

Syed Sulaiman Nadvi
Desna, Bihar
December, 1925

Foreword to the Third Edition

All praise be to Allah, who has granted immense popularity to these lectures which were written rather hastily. They were received with equal enthusiasm and warmth by all classes of Muslim society and were read with great adoration. It is only due to Allah's Grace and Kindness that they have become so popular and beneficial, and are vastly read in schools and in religious gatherings all over the country.

In the course of these lectures, there has come a certain inevitable comparison between the life and personality of Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) and of other prophets of Allah, which is permissible. However, it must be borne in mind that on such occasions the comparison has been made by way of argument and is in reply to what the non-Muslims believe about certain prophets and what has been written about their personalities in their own religious books. As far as the Islamic point of view is concerned every prophet of Allah had the purest of character, was infallible in his conveyance of the Divine message and was an ideal personality for the guidance of mankind. In spite of the differences in recording their life histories due to different times and different abilities of the biographers, their real personalities remain above and beyond all criticism and fault finding.

These lectures were first published in 1926, while I was in the Hejaz, from an unrevised draft. The same thing happened with the second edition. I have been able to revise the third edition but still it cannot be claimed that a man's every effort is free from all error. Therefore, I say this short prayer using the words of the holy Quran:

"Our Lord condemn us not, if we forget or fall into error"

Syed Sulaiman Nadvi
27th Sha'ban, 1355
(14th November, 1936)

Introduction

Gentlemen! After a period of fifteen years I have got this opportunity to come here at the request of the Muslim Education Society, and present to you different aspects of the life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) in the form of eight lectures which will be delivered in eight different meetings in the following order.

1. The perfection of human spirit can be achieved only through following the ideal life of a Prophet of Allah.

2. The life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the most comprehensive and eternal model for mankind.

3. The historic aspect of Prophet Muhammad's life.

4. The completeness of the biographical details of the Prophet's life.

5. The comprehensive nature of the Prophet's personality.

6. The practical nature of the Prophet's character.

7. The Message of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him)

8. Faith and Practice

Madras has introduced a new series of Islamic lectures to its young generation as a way of learning their religion which is undoubtedly the first of its kind to come forth from our Muslim educational organization. Madras has the honor of being the first province of India, where the light of Islam appeared and this happened at a time when not a single soldier of Islam had set foot on the Indian sub-continent.

This light was the light of one of the miracles of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) wherein the full moon was caused to split into two and then return to its normal shape. If this report of the miracle is authentic (as it was reported in "Tuhfatul Mujahideen" and supported by our Muslim brother Dr. Ghulam Mohammad who has himself read exactly the same account of the event in an ancient manuscript of the Hindus in Sansikrit, and which he has subsequently published), we should not be surprised at the initiative taken by the Muslim Education Society of Madras. They deserve to be the first in the service of Islam, and this historic right is not something new to them. It goes 1300 years back into history. I hope the Muslim educational organizations in other parts of India will follow this brilliant

and enviable example set by Madras. Gentlemen! I am making my speech in Urdu and although it has developed to the extent that it is now spoken and understood in most parts of India, I still feel that in Madras these lectures should have been given in English in order to have a greater benefit, and people who do not know Urdu at all could have participated too. Today's experience also proves that it is incumbent upon our *Ulema* to learn English. I hope the time will come soon when our *Ulema* will be able to carry the Message of Allah to all mankind in all the languages taught by Him.

Lecture 1. Prophets of Allah: The Only Ideals for Mankind

The life around us is full of all kinds of wonders. Scattered in the world are different creatures with distinct qualities and characteristics. A close look at Allah's creation shows that from inanimate things to the human beings there has been a gradual progress of sense, perception and will. The basic forms of inorganic matter show a complete lack of sense and perception. Some other kinds of material show a faint trace of some kind of life. In growing plants involuntary presence of senses can be felt. In the animal world along with the senses there is some kind of will. In human beings, the power to control their thoughts, actions and desires makes them the most responsible of all created beings. The degree of responsibility in other creatures is proportional to the degree of free will given to them. The inorganic things are entirely free from all responsibility. Plants are subject to the laws of life and death. In the animal world, the responsibilities are increased further but it is mankind that is bound by obligations all over. Within their own kind, the mentally ill, the idiots and children on the one side and the adults, the learned, and the intellectuals on the other have to bear the burden of responsibility according to the power of perception and will present in them.

Look at it from another perspective. Allah's power of creation and sustenance takes care of all the needs of the created beings but gradually the burden of responsibility is put on the creature itself as it develops its own sense and will power. Who creates and nurtures the precious jewels in the hearts of the mountains? Who rears the fish in the depth of oceans? Who looks after the beasts of the jungle? Who cares about the animals in the cold of winter and the heat of summer and heals their sick? You will notice an apparent difference in the paws, the hair and the color of their skin and their looks even among the same species of animals depending on the difference in their habitat. The needs of the dog of Europe and that of Africa are different and nature provides for them from its own resources. For example, the European dog's coat is woollier and thicker than the African's. These are some of the various ways how nature provides for their different needs and they also show how it compensates and covers up wherever there is a weakness of sense and will power. And in Allah's creatures who are given this power in a greater degree and when they reach a stronger and maturer state, nature automatically withdraws itself and leaves them free to look after their needs themselves. For example, man has to work for his living which is not provided to him directly. He has to bear the burden of cultivation; he has to plant and grow his own food. He is not born with a woolly skin for protection

against severe winter. He has to make his own clothes. He has to find his own cure for his illnesses and he has to nurse his own wounds.

On the other hand, wherever there is a weakness of sense and perception, nature itself provides for the defense and protection of life. Different animals have been given different means of defense such as sharp claws, pointed teeth, the ability to fly, and the ability to run fast. Some have been given a poisonous sting; others have been given poisonous fangs. In short, they have been armed with various devices of self defence. However, man does not possess any of these weapons. He does not have the pointed teeth and strong paws of a lion; nor the long trunk and strong tusks of an elephant; nor the sharp horns of a bull; nor the poison a snake; nor the sting of a hornet or a scorpion. Outwardly, he seems utterly defenseless and vulnerable. Yet, he is able to overpower the long tusked elephants, the fiercely strong-pawed lions and fearfully poisonous snakes. He can catch the free flying birds into his snares and trap the creatures of deep waters. He can produce all kinds of defensive and offensive weapons. Man can achieve all this because he has been given tremendous powers of mind, sensory perception, reason and a free will. These are the powers that compensate his outer weaknesses and these are the powers that distinguish him from other creatures.

And my friends, no matter what your creed or religion might be, you cannot deny that it is these very powers of mind and will which make you responsible human beings, and make you accountable to The Creator for your actions. In terms of Islam, these responsibilities have been named as "religious burden" and the amount of this burden varies according to man's mental and physical capabilities. Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of man and of the entire universe, states this principle in the final revelation, the Holy Quran:

"Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity…."

(Chp.2:Vrs.286)

In another verse of the Holy Quran, the same burden or obligation has been expressed through the word amanah or trust. This trust was offered to all creatures but they refused to carry it. They preferred to follow the Will of Allah without having to choose between good and evil with a free will. The Quranic verse states:

"We did offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear its burden and were afraid of it, and man picked it up. Indeed he is unjust (to himself), unaware (of the end)."

(Chp.33:Vrs.72)

The burden of free will fell to man's lot. The freedom of choice between good and evil has made him accountable for his actions. Other creatures do not have the freedom of action; therefore, they have no responsibility.

In this context, being unjust means transgressing the limits. This reflects the imbalance in the use of man's physical powers, whereas being foolish or ignorant means crossing the limits of his mental powers. The counterpart of "Unjust" is "just" and the opposite of "ignorant" is "knowledgeable". These are the qualities he does not, in fact, possess. In order to achieve them he needs to strike a balance in his physical and mental faculties. He needs justice or moderation in the application of his physical power and he needs to replace his ignorance by knowledge and insight. In the Quranic terms the first faculty is known as the "righteous deeds", whereas "knowledge" means Faith in Allah (the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe). Consider the following verses of the holy Quran:

"(I swear) by the Time,

Man is in a state of loss indeed,

Except those who believed and did righteous deeds, and exhorted each other to follow truth, and exhorted each other to observe patience."

(Surah Al-Asr)

The loss mentioned in these verses represents the transgression and ignorance of man, the imbalance in his physical and mental powers. And its remedy lies in Faith (which means true knowledge) and in moderation (which means righteous deeds). In other words man remains in perpetual oss unless he attains a balance in the use of his physical and mental powers by gaining Faith and Righteous Deeds. As a witness to this fact Allah has brought in the evidence of Time through Ages. This means the events of man's own history since the inception of this world. According to Thomas Carlyle's famous remark, history is only the biography of great men. The history of men and nations clearly shows that all great men and all nations have always been the losers who lacked the essential qualities of Faith and Righteous Deeds.

All the heavenly and religious books, morality stories and other records of human success and failure tell the tale of the eternal conflict between good and evil, between the darkness of ignorance and the light of faith. On the one hand you can see the forces of oppression, ignorance, evil and gloom, and on the other,

justice, righteousness, goodness and light. These tales are full of praise for those who recognized and accepted the burden of human responsibilities, and condemnation for those who failed and refused to carry the human burden. The Greek Iliad, the Roman Parallel Lives, the Persian epic Shahnama and the ancient Indian Maha Bharat & Ramayan and Geeta are nothing but the classic tales of that eternal conflict. Every nation has derived moral lessons from the biographies of its great men and learnt from their lives the examples of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, oppression and justice, belief and disbelief, so that they could avoid the dire consequences of evil, ignorance and oppression and benefit from the examples of goodness, knowledge, justice and faith. Of the heavenly books such as the Old and the New Testament and the holy Quran the main themes are the same examples of the woeful end of the wicked, oppressive and faithless nations or individuals, and the triumph of the just, the good and the believers. Their purpose was to convert the oppressors into believers. Before Prophet Muhammad, the last of Allah's prophets, many prophets were sent throughout the ages all over the world to preach the Divine Message through personal example so that their people or the virtuous among them could achieve eternal success by following those prophets. And finally, Prophet Muhammad, 'the Mercy to the Worlds', was sent so that he should leave his ideal life as a perfect model for humanity for all times to come. The Divine revelation itself presents the Prophet's pure and virtuous life (before he was ordained a prophet by Allah) as a testimony to his prophethood. A Quranic verse states:

"Say, "Had Allah so willed, I would have not recited it to you, nor would He have let you know it. Then, I have lived among you for years before it. Have you, then, no sense?"

(Chp.10:Vrs.16)

Human history is full of the records of thousands of remarkable personalities who set their lives as examples for the future generations. You may find among them mighty emperors holding their magnificent courts; great army generals; serene thinkers and solemn philosophers; intimidating conquerors; poets lost in their dream world and the rich surrounded by their treasures and luxuries. The life of each one of these has a special glamour and a tremendous appeal for the ordinary folk. Be it Hanibal of Carthage, Alexander of Macedonia, Caesar of Rome, Darius of Persia or Napoleon of France, all of them hold a special fascination for common people. Similarly, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes and other Greek philosophers like them, along with Spencer and their likes have an attraction of their own. Nimrod, the Pharoah, Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab stand out in a different way. Qaroon (or Korah) shows yet another aspect of human life. In short there are

hundreds of different kinds of examples for the ordinary human being to follow. But of all these various types, which one can guarantee a peaceful and happy life and show the way to eternal salvation? Among these examples, which one deserves to be followed? There are conquerors and great leaders of men who changed the shape of the world with the might of their swords. But did they leave anything behind for the well being of humanity? Their glory was limited to the battlefield alone and they failed to free humanity from the grip of superstition and evil thoughts. They could never solve the complex problems of human relationship. Did they leave any plan for the progress of human civilization? Did they have any answers for our spiritual problems, our miseries and despair? Did they set any guidelines for building a noble human character bearing high morals?

This world of ours has produced numerous great poets too. But these rulers of the world of fancy have utterly failed in the practical world of reality. Therefore, Plato would have no use for them in his ideal Republic. Since Homer to the present time, what have they contributed to solving human problems? They have only supplied a momentary gratification of certain human emotions and created a fanciful world of unreal pains and pleasures. They have failed to leave a healthy impact on human life because their sweet and fancy words are not backed by actual deeds. The holy Quran says:

"As for the poets, they are followed by the straying people.

Did you not see that they wander in every valley,

And that they say what they do not?

Except those who believe and do righteous deeds…"

(Chp.26:Vrs. 224-227)

The Divine verses have exposed the emptiness of their sweet words and have explained why they fail to leave any deep impression on life. They are insincere (they preach what they do not practice). They lack a serious purpose in life. Therefore, they wander in the world created by their own imagination. If they had faith and sincerity of purpose they would leave some impact on life. However, they cannot carry the burden of showing the light of guidance to the whole world. The history of the world bears witness to this fact.

Great thinkers and philosophers who have changed the course of life several times over and who have put forth brilliant theories to explain the riddle of life

have failed to offer any practical and realistic solutions for human problems. They have failed to lighten the burden of humanity be cause their deep and subtle theories were not accompanied by any practical examples for the ordinary people to follow. Aristotle was the founder of the philosophy of ethics. His philosophy is still the subject of many brilliant lectures in universities all over the world and he is paid tribute for his lofty ideas in ethical philosophy. But, realistically speaking, how many people gave up their evil ways and came to the right path because of him? Today, in every university of the world you will find great professors and teachers of ethics but their knowledge and influence is limited to the boundary walls of their schools, because when they come out in practical life, they are no different from ordinary human beings. Man is not made by words alone. Actions speak louder.

On the stage of this world great kings and powerful rulers have made their appearance, too. They have had absolute control over vast empires. They have plundered and dominated whole nations of the world. They have devastated some countries and built others. They have degraded one nation and raised the other, snatching from one and giving to the other. The holy Quran sums it up in the words of the Queen of Sheba:

"She said, "In fact when the kings enter a town, they put it to disorder, and put its honorable citizens to disgrace, and this is how they normally do." **(Chp.27:Vrs.34)**

Although the terror of their swords forced criminals to escape into the underworld, they were utterly helpless in wiping out crimes. They were able to establish superficial peace and security in towns and streets, but they had no peace to offer to the human hearts. They established law and order in their countries but the spiritual kingdom remained beyond their reach. In fact, all kinds of spiritual devastation and moral decay took root in their royal courts and then spread all over the world. Did despots like Alexander or Caesar leave a heritage for the human beings to be proud of?

This world has seen great law makers too, like Solon (an Athenian poet and statesman of the seventh century B.C., known for his legal reforms) but their laws did not last long and their followers could not find the secret to the purification of the human heart. The following generations found their laws unsuitable for the needs of their time or rather incompatible with their own selfish interests. So those laws were repealed and replaced by other laws in the name of public welfare and reform. Does the situation look any different in our own times? In our age of modern civilization, parliaments and legislative assemblies are formed

which make one law today only to be replaced by another tomorrow, usually not for the welfare of the public but to serve those in power.

My dear friends! By now you must have formed some idea of the higher classes of the human race who could be expected to lead the way to human welfare and reform. But you have to carefully consider and think deeply to ask yourselves a question. The little decency that we find in the world today, the glimmer of virtue, the sincerity and purity of human hearts it not the result of the teachings of the noblest amongst the human race, known as the Prophets of Allah? (Peace he upon them all) Wherever you find a trace of virtue, of love, of sympathy and consideration, of justice and fairness, of helping the unfortunate and the poor and caring for the orphans you will notice that it is the fruit of the teachings of one of those noble men of Allah. According to the holy Quran:

"….You are but a warner; and for every people there is a guide."

(Chp.13:Vrs.7)

"…and there was no community without a warner having passed among them."

(Chp.35:Vrs.24)

Today we see the light of their teachings and traces of their call reflected in all nations and all countries. Be it the "savages" of Africa or the civilized Europeans, the purification of their hearts is done by the same Divine source. Of all the leaders of human beings, the Prophets of God are the noblest and most exalted. They do not control the human bodies like kings but their domain is the kingdom of souls. They win the human hearts. They do not carry the power of the sword, yet they wipe out sin and cleanse the human soul. They are not masters of the art of poetry, yet the sweetness of their words is still felt in human culture. Although, apparently they were not senators or legislators, yet laws given by them are still alive and prevail over the ruler and the ruled, the poor and the rich alike, treating everyone equally and fairly.

It is not a question of faith or religion but of authentic history. Is it not a fact that the laws and commands of the great ruler, Ashoka of Patliputra have been left engraved only on stones? But Buddha's instructions are still found imprinted on the hearts of his followers. Time has wiped out the commands of such powerful Rajas as the ancient rulers of Ujjain, Hastnapur (Delhi) and Qannoj, but Manuji's Dharam Shaster still prevails. The legal code set down by Babylon's first law-giver Hanurabi has long been burned but the teachings of Ibrahim (Peace be upon

him) are still with us. The Pharoah's cry: "I am your supreme lord" did not last very long but the miracles of Moses (Peace be upon him) still fascinate the world. Laws made by Solon lasted but for a little while, whereas the Divine laws of Torah are still the basis of human justice. The Roman law that held Christ (Peace be upon him) guilty has been dead for centuries but Christ's teachings still convert sinners into pious people and criminals into good men.

The pomp and power of Abu Jahal of Makkah: of Kisra the ancient emperor of Iran and of the Caesar of Rome have been wiped out but the Prophet of Madinah (Peace be upon him), after fourteen centuries, continues to rule millions of hearts all over the world.

My dear friends! If my talk so far has reached your hearts and has left any impression there, it is not because of my personal faith I have based my arguments on reason and I have tried to bring in evidence to support them from authentic human history. Perhaps you can now conclude that if anyone has ever sincerely and successfully strived for the well being of mankind and for the lofty ideal of spreading virtuous deeds, good morals, purity of hearts, and moderation and balance in human actions, it is the noble group of the prophets of God. They were selected and sent by Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of mankind, and they showed people the right path. They taught people the way of decency and goodness and left behind them shining examples of knowledge and noble conduct. Their instructions and guidance continue to inspire and show the way to the kings and their subjects, the poor and the rich, the illiterate and the scholars alike.

Consider these verses of the holy Quran:

"That is the decisive argument from Us that We gave to Ibrāhīm against his people. We raise in ranks whomsoever We will. Surely, your Lord is Wise, Knowing.

We bestowed upon him IsHāq and Ya_qūb . Each one of them We guided to the right path. Earlier, We guided NūH and, of his progeny, (We guided) Dawūd and Sulaimān and Ayyūb and Yūsuf (Joseph) and Mūsā and Hārūn. Thus We reward those who are good in deeds

and (We guided) Zakariyyā and YaHyā and _Īsā and Ilyās; each one of them was of the righteous

and Ismā_īl and Yasa and Yūnus and LūT, and all of them We made to excel over all the people of the world (in their respective times).

We guided many among their fathers and their children and their brothers, and We chose them and led them on to the straight path.

That is Allah's guidance. He guides with it whomsoever He wills from among His servants. Had they associated partners with Him, all they did would have been nullified for them.

They are those whom We have given the Book and wisdom and prophethood. So, if these people disbelieve this (concept of Prophet-hood), then (be not grieved, because) We have deputed for (believing in) it a people who do not reject it.

Those are the people whom Allah has guided. So, it is their guidance that you should follow. Say, "I ask you no reward for it. It is nothing but an advice for all the worlds."

(Chp.6:Vrs.83-90)

These verses contain some of the names of the noblest among mankind who were chosen to show them the right path. In following their guidance lays the cure for all our spiritual diseases and moral weak nesses. These are the holy men of Allah who received a direct guidance from Him and spread its light all over the known world at different times in human histoty. If we find any degree of success or bliss or nobility of character or other higher human values and virtues in our lives to day, it is due to the blessing and the mission of these holy men of Allah. The traces of their teachings are scattered everywhere and they continue to show the world the way to eternal success.

Noah's dedication to his mission, Abraham's infallible faith in the Oneness of Allah, Isaac's noble heritage, Ishmael's supreme sacrifice, the tireless effort of Moses, Aaron's constant support, Jacob's submission to the Will of Allah, David's grief over the people's failure to recognize the Truth, Solomon's matchless wisdom, Zacharia's tireless devotion, John's piety, the ascetic and selfless ways of Jesus, Jonah's repentance, Lot's dedication, and Ayub's patient acceptance of Allah's Will are some of the highest examples of the noble human values which give our spiritual and moral world its dignity and charm. Wherever these values exist they are due to the personal and practical examples of these holy men of Allah.

There is no doubt that people from all walks of life have contributed towards building the human civilization and culture as it stands today and have in their own way worked for the betterment, welfare and happiness of mankind. Their accumulative efforts have helped man to earn his position as the noblest of Allah's creatures in the universe. Astronomers have traced the movements of

planets; scientists have found out the properties and characteristics of various substances; doctors have found remedies for diseases; architects have evolved the art of building beautifully and craftsmen have introduced numerous crafts and skills. Their combined efforts have made our world a highly developed and sophisticated place to live. They all deserve our collective gratitude. But we are really grateful to those who have made our inner life and spiritual world. They have strived to remove the baser desires from our hearts and purify them from greed and selfishness. They have evolved remedies for our spiritual ailments and found a cure for our diseased souls. They have given our emotions, our feelings and our intentions proper direction following which we can attain great purity of heart. They have made our souls sublime and have warned us of other ways which lead to total destruction of the human soul and make it the lowest of the low. It is their teaching which has completed the shape of the civilized world and showed it the proper way of living. As a result good moral conduct and noble behaviour is considered the essence of humanity. Undoubtedly human society is established on the principles of justice, goodness, sympathy and consideration for one another. They have shown us the way to recognize and strengthen our link with Allah, our Creator and Sustainer and our Master. And they have reminded us of our covenant with Allah wherein each human soul had acknowledged and testified (in their prenatal existence) that Allah is their Creator, Cherisher and Sustainer.

Only through this Divine knowledge and guidance revealed to these noble men of Allah can we understand the secrets of complex human nature, and find our true destiny and real happiness. A world ignorant of their teachings would remain incomplete and lacking and would never become harmonious as a whole. Therefore, this exalted and purest group of the human race deserves our greatest gratitude because we are indebted to them more than any one else. Even human being, regardless of his creed and country ought to pay tribute to them. According to the Islamic tradition this is known as "salat wa salam" which means Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon them. This homage is paid by the Muslims when a Prophet's name is mentioned. May Allah's Mercy, and Blessings be upon them all.

Gentlemen! These noble souls came into this world at their appointed time and passed away. Nothing is eternal in this mortal world. Holy and pure they certainly were, yet they were not immortal. They have left glorious examples for the generations that were to follow them. Whatever has been preserved and recorded from their nobte words and deeds can show the right path to humanity. The records of their noble lives is the invaluable heritage and the only reliable

means of knowing our past: its sciences, its arts, its ideas and its important events. These may be called history or biography. We may find a useful lesson in other aspects of life but the ethical and spiritual side of humankind needs only one source for its purification and perfection and that is the life history of the Prophets of Allah and those vho followed in their footsteps. This world has benefited from them ever since and that is where its future success lies. Therefore, for the benefit of this world, for its spiritual health and salvation, it is necessary to preserve and protect the noble heritage of the records of these exalted personalities.

The best of philosophies, education, training and guidance cannot be fruitful unless there is a strong personality associated with it that can carry out this mission by setting a personal example, and thus become the center of our adoration, love and respect. I happened to meet Dr. Tagore, the famous Indian poet, on a ship in February 1924, while travelling back to India from Egypt and the Hejaz. One of our fellow travellers asked him why "Brahmo Samaj" (a religious reform movement) had failed to bring about the desired results in India even though its fundamental principles were based on fairness, tolerance and respect for others. The creed recognized the goodness of all religions and their founders and had nothing against logic and reason. It was devised keeping in view the needs of the modem society, its culture, philosophy and present circumstances and yet it remained fruitless. The philosopher poet's reply was based on one central point. He said the reason for its failure was that there was no personality behind it which could inspire and lead us by setting a personal and practical example and thus hold our respect and attention. This point clearly proves that no religion can command any respect without the practical life and personal example of its founder.

In short, for our guidance and leadership we need men who are superior to the common man in their sincerity of purpose, their innocence and purity of heart, their perfection of all higher values. And they can only be the Prophets of Allah. May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon them all.

Lecture 2. The Life of Prophet Muhammad - the Most Comprehensive and Eternal Model

Only the noble and the ideal life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) can be a universal and eternal example for mankind to follow.

Dear friends! Today, we are here for our second meeting together. If you keep in mind what has been said so far, we might continue our talk in a fruitful manner. The sum of my previous lecture was that the light of the past is essential so that we may see the present and the future clearly. All those good men who have contributed to the betterment of human life deserve our gratitude but the ones who have done mankind the greatest favour are the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, ordained by Him to show His servants the right path (May Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon them all. Each one of them, in his own time and in front of his own people, showed the highest and the noblest examples of human character in a miraculous manner. Some of them showed the ideal example of fortitude; some of self-denial; some of sacrifice; some of love for the Truth; some of their enthusiasm in submission to the Will of Allah; some of piety, and yet some others for austerity. In short, each of them is a lighthouse of guidance showing the right way in the complexities of human life. But we were in need of one who could light the path of human life from end to end; who could provide the light of guidance with the brightness of his own personal and practical examples. In other words, who could provide us with a guide book of practical examples following which all of us could reach the goal of our life in peace and comfort. And the one chosen to perform this task is the last in the chain of the Prophets of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's Blessings and Peace be upon them).

In the words of the holy Quran:

"O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and as a bearer of good news and a warner, and as the one who calls (people) towards Allah with His permission, and as a luminous lamp."

(Chp, 33: Vrs, 45-46)

He is witness to the Divine Guidance and instruction sent down by Almighty Allah; he brings the good news of an eternally successful life and the permanent joy of the hereafter to the righteous. To those who are still ignorant of the Truth he brings the divine warning to make them aware and alert. Those who are lost in the mad struggle of this temporary world are called back by him to Allah. He is a

beacon of light that shows the right way and removes the darkness of doubt and ignorance. And he does so through personal example and the nobility of his own flawless character. As a matter of fact, every messenger of Allah was sent to this world as a witness, a preacher, a bringer of good news and a warner. But all these qualities do not combine predominantly in one personality. For example, many of Allahs Prophets stand out as witnesses, like Jacob, Isaac and Ismael. There were many like Abraham and Jesus who are bearers of good tidings. Some were outstanding warners like Noah, Moses, Hud and Shoaib. Yet others distinguish themselves by calling to the Truth, for example, Joseph and Jonah (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon them all). But Prophet Muhammad's mission includes all these qualities combined in one personality. He was a witness, a bringer of good news, a warner, a preacher of the Truth, a beacon of light all at the same time. It was only natural that it should be so because he was chosen to be the last of Allah's prophets after whom no prophet was ever to be sent by Allah. He was sent with a code of life which was complete and final. No one was ever going to come to modify it or add anything to it.

His instruction was definitive and eternal. It was to remain intact till the Day of Judgment. Therefore his personality was made an ideal personality combining the best of human qualities to the degree of perfection.

Dear friends! Whatever I have just said is not a claim based merely on my personal religious belief but it is a unique event in human history based on undeniably sound evidence and authentic historical sources.

Any life-history that claims to be an ideal model for humanity to follow must live up to certain criteria and meet certain conditions. The first and the most important of these conditions is that such a biography must be historically authentic, based on firm and sound evidence. Let us consider Prophet Muhammad's life in the light of these principles.

Historical Soundness: What is meant here by historical soundness is that whatever events are recorded in the life history of an ideal person must be authentic and true, and those reporting and recording such events should also be reliable and trustworthy. Otherwise they will be no more than myths or fictional stories. It is a matter of human psychology and a simple everyday experience that myths or imaginary stories do not leave a deep and lasting impression on human behaviour as do the true events in the life of a real personality. Therefore it is essential for an ideal biography to be free from all doubts, and all of its major events must be supported by sound historical proof.

Unlike fiction, the biography of a historic person is not meant to provide entertainment for a few hours only but it has a serious purpose. It is meant to be an ideal, so that we could follow it and shape our lives according to the principles and values highlighted by it. But if that ideal life is merely fictional, or if its events cannot be proved to be historically true beyond a reasonable doubt, it cannot be effectively presented as a practical example to be followed by others. Such a biography can easily be dismissed as a myth or an old wives' tale which entertain people but can not become the basis on which to model a practical life. For a biography to be effective and a model, it is essential that it should contain real events of a perfect person's life and that it should have standard historical references. It is not possible for ordinary human beings to shape their practical life on a mythical hero's achievements.

We hold all the prophets of God in great esteem, and believe in the truth of their mission and their being ordained only by Allah. But according to this Divine verse of the holy Quran:

"Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others….."

(Chp.2:Vrs.253)

We can say that Prophet Muhammad's mission is different from others in the sense that it has been made universal by God, whereas the other Prophets were sent to a particular nation at a particular time of history. Their mission was not meant to last forever. Their purpose was to provide guidance for a given period therefore the details of their lives and mission, and of the nations they guided have been lost in history. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has a special status because he was chosen to be the last of God's prophets. (He has been called, "the Seal of Prophets" in the holy Quran.) His life shows the perfection in applying the divine ethical principles in all walks of life in a way that no other human being has ever achieved. He shows the way to Allah through personal example. Prophethood has ended with Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). His life history has been miraculously preserved to its smallest details for any one who chooses to follow the divine guidance and apply it in everyday life.

Can you imagine the number of Allah's messengers who came into this world to every country, to every nation with its own different language, at different times of history? According to an Islamic tradition their number is approximately a hundred and twenty-four thousand. Yet how many of them do we know by their names today? And the one's we know by names, how much do we know about

them? Of all the nations of the world, the Hindus claim to be the oldest in history. They are not Muslim but their religion contains hundreds of holy characters. None of them can lay a claim to "historicity" (having verifiable historical details). Many of them are just mentioned by name and hardly ever cross the border of mythology into the world of history. The best known amongst them are the heroes of the ancient Indian epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. But the events of their life cannot be considered history. To what period of history do they belong? Nobody can tell. Only recently a few European historians have ventured to determine approximately the era to which they might belong. That is about the only evidence the Hindus can come up with, whereas most European scholars do not even consider them as history and doubt that those events ever took place in the real world.

The founder of the ancient Persian religion, Zoroaster, is still idealized by millions. Yet, historically he is an obscure personality, to the extent that some American and European scholars doubt that such a person ever lived. Amongst the orientalists who concede that he had a historical existence, there is a great difference of opinion regarding his personal life. The picture that emerges through the research of these scholars is mainly based on guesswork. It is full of contradictions and conflicting opinions to such a degree that hardly anyone would like to make it a model on which to base their practical life. The time and place of Zoroaster's birth, his ancestry, his family, his faith, its propagation, the truthfulness of his scripture, his language, the time and place of his death are some of the facts of his life which raise hundreds of questions and there is hardly a shred of sound evidence that could answer them. The Parsees themselves (Zoroaster's followers) have to depend on the research done by the American or European scholars rather than their own sources, which is limited to Firdausi's Shahnama, the classical Persian epic. The excuse that they were eliminated by the Greeks is irrelevant to our argument. The fact is that Zoroaster's life remains obscure due to lack of historical evidence and that in itself is a proof that his life history was not meant to last for ever. It is this lack of evidence that led the scholars like Kern and Dar Metatar to claim that Zoroaster never existed as a historical person.

Buddhism was once Asia's greatest religion which dominated countries like India, China, Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries. It still exists in Burma, Thailand, China and Tibet. It may be said that in India, the Brahamans wiped it out, and it was eliminated by Islam in Central Asia. Yet, in the Far East it still retains its powerful influence over the people, their governments and their culture, and remains unconquered up to this day. However, all that power and

glory failed to retain the significant details of Buddha's life and mission. They cannot satisfactorily answer a biographer's questions. Buddha's existence in history is determined through the historical account of the Rajas of Magadh. That is the only available historical source. It was possible to determine the time of their reign because these rulers had, by chance, established diplomatic relations with the Greeks.

Confucius, the founder of another great religion of ancient China, is even a lesser known entity despite the fact that his followers run into millions. Hundreds of prophets are known to have come to the Semites but history can tell us no more than their names. Very little do we know about Noah, Hud, Abraham, Saleh, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Zacharia and John (Peace be upon them all). The basic and most important facts are missing from whatever accounts of their lives were recorded in history. Today, the incomplete and incorrect descriptions of their sacred lives cannot become the basis on which to form a full, practical human life. Apart from the Holy Quran which gives some information about these Prophets, the Jewish scriptures cannot stand up to the criticism and doubts of the modern scholars. Even if we ignore their criticism, the pictures of these holy prophets of Allah that come out of the Jewish scriptures remain hopelessly scanty and incomplete.

We get to know Moses (Peace be upon him) from Torah. But the Torah that exists today, according to the writers of Encyclopedia Britannica and some other scholars, came into being several hundred years after the death of Moses (Peace be upon him). Some German scholars have shown that in the present day Torah there are two different accounts of nearly every episode described in it. They exist side by side, sometimes contradicting each other. The details of this theory can be seen in the Encyclopedia Britannica under the heading 'Bible'. This leaves all the events in Torah about Moses or even before him going back to Adam (Peace be upon him) historically unsound and unreliable.

The gospels in the Bible are the descriptions of the life and teachings of Christ (Peace be upon him). But of the many gospels only four are recognized by a major part of the Christian world. The rest, like that of Barnabas are not considered to be authentic. None of the authors of the four gospels ever met Christ in person. What was their source of information? No one can answer that question. It is even doubtful whether the four were the actual authors of those gospels. It cannot be clearly established in what languages were the gospels written and when they were written. The time of the authorship of these gospels has variously been given, anything between 60 AD and afterwards, by different

scholars of the Bible. Considering Christ's birth, his death and dogma of Trinity, certain American critics and rationalists now maintain that Christ's existence is merely fiction, the idea of his birth and that of Trinity is simply retold from Greek and Roman mythologies, because similar ideas about their gods and heroes existed among those nations long before the coming of Christ (Peace be upon him). An argument along these lines went on for months in "Roupin Court", a well-known Chicago journal. This simply proves how weak the Christian sources are with regard to establishing Christ (Peace be upon him) as a historic personality.

Completeness: For a life history to become an ideal for all times, and a model for everyone to follow, it is essential that every aspect of such a person's life should be in the open. No event should be left to secrecy or the darkness of uncertainty. All the events of his life should be as clearly known as the daylight so that his life could become an ideal for the human race.

If we make this a yardstick and measure the life histories of the great men of the past, including the founders of the great religions of the world, no one comes anywhere near this standard except the last Prophet of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). We have already established that of the thousands of great prophets and reformers, just a few can be regarded 'historic' in the sense that the details of their life history can be verified through authentic historical sources. Yet even they cannot lay a claim to 'comprehensiveness' because the important details of their life history are simply not available now. It is only Prophet Muhammad's life which is completely known today, even to the minutest detail. This fact also makes it clear that he was the last Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him).

On the other hand, let us consider the life of Buddha, one of the great men of history, whose followers constitute nearly a fourth of the world's population. Whatever we know of his life is based on conjecture or fiction. Even if we give those stories the status of history and look for the essential details of Buddha's life we will be disappointed. All we get to know is that once upon a time there was a Raja who ruled the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. The Raja's son had the natural inclination towards tradition and deep thinking. When he grew up, got married and became a father, he happened to notice the plight of some miserable people. Their suffering left such a deep mark on his sensitive nature that he gave up his princely life and left his home forever. His wanderlust took him to various cities of India like Banaras, Patliputra and the countryside and mountains. After a time, he is said to have found the truth while meditating under

a tree in Gaya. He preached his new found truth from Banaras to Bihar for a period of time and then passed away. That is all we know about Buddha. Similarly, Zoroaster is the founder of a religion. We have established that what little is known about him is based on guesswork [Britannica].

The best known of the prophets prior to Prophet Muhammad is Moses (Peace be upon them). For the sake of argument, we may disregard the point whether the present Torah is authentic and admit that whatever it says is true. What do we get to know about Moses from the five books of Torah put together? All that we know is that he was brought up in the house of the Pharaoh. When he grew up he helped the children of Israel on an occasion or two against the oppression of the Pharaoh's men. He fled to Madayin, got married and having spent a considerable period of time there, returned to Egypt. On his way to Egypt, he was ordained a prophet. He showed some miracles in front of the Pharaoh and asked him to let the children of Israel go with him. Eventually he left Egypt along with his people, pursued by the Pharaoh's army. By Allah's command the sea gave way to him and his people, whereas the Pharaoh and his men were drowned in the same water. He entered Arabia and then Syria and subdued a few non-believers He lived like that for a period of time, grew old and died on a hill top. The concluding sentences of the Torah contain the following:

"So the servant of the Lord died in the valley of Moab, by the command of his Lord. His burial took place at Bethpeor but no one knows his grave to this day He was 120 years of age when he died. And no prophet like Moses was ever born among Bani Israel.'

These sentences belong to the fifth book of Torah which is ascribed to Moses. They make it clear that this book, or at least the last portion of it, cannot have been written by Moses. Who wrote them? The world does not know anything about this biographer of Moses.

The words that "no one knows his grave to this day" and "no prophet like Moses was ever born among Bani Israel" indicate that they were written long after the death of Moses (Peace be upon him), long enough for people to have forgotten a personality like Moses, and when the advent of a new prophet could have been expected.

Moses (Peace be upon him) lived to be 120. However; it will not be out of place to ask at this point an appropriate question. What events of his life do we actually know to fill a long span of a hundred and twenty years? Apart from his birth, his migration, marriage and his being ordained a prophet, what essential details of his biography are known to us? What we do know are merely the personal details

of one's life which with slight variations are repetitious and insignificant. What we need in a great biography is a way of life full of essential details to be followed as a role model of a great moral conduct. These are the very ingredients missing from the biography of Moses (Peace be upon him). Otherwise, in Torah, there is no lack of insignificant details, such as names of persons, their ancestry, names of places, official counting of the population and some legal jargon. These details might be interesting for a research scholar interested in ancient geography, chronology, ancestry and law but have no value at all as the biography of a great leader of men who could guide them through his practical example.

In point of time the nearest to Islam is the Prophet of God, Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him). His followers are known to be greater in number than those of any other religion in the world. You will be shocked to learn that biographically he is the least known of all the Prophets and founders of well-known religions. It is interesting to note that Christian scholars of modern Europe have made astounding discoveries in their chosen fields of antiquity and archaeology. They have unearthed and made known the ancient secrets of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, of Arabia and Syria, of Egypt and Africa, of India and Turkistan of the old. They have excavated the ancient ruins and studied old books and parchments to rewrite the lost pages of human history. However, the miracle of modern research has failed to resurrect the actual events of the life of Jesus Christ, lost to the passage of time for ever. Professor Renan did all he could, but failed to produce any authentic account of Christs life.

It might be worthwhile to quote here from an article on Jesus Christ written for the Encyclopedia Britannica by Rev Dr. Charles Anderson Scot. He says that the attempt to write a "life of Jesus" should frankly be abandoned. The material for it certainly does not exist. He has calculated that the total number of days of the life regarding which we have any record does not exceed fifty.

According to the Bible, Jesus had a life of 33 years. Firstly, the present day Bible is historically unreliable. However, whatever we get to know from it concerns only the events of the last three years of his life. All we can learn, from the Bible is that he was born and after his birth was brought to Egypt. He showed a few miracles in his early youth and then disappeared. When we meet him next, he is 30 years of age, baptizing and giving sermons to people in the mountains and to fishermen by the riverside. He produces a few disciples, gets into discussions with the Jews. Eventually the Jews capture him and produce him in the court of the Roman governor where his case is heard and the sentence of crucifixion is passed on him. On the third day after the crucifixion his grave is found to be empty. The

world will never know what happened during a period of 25 to 30 years of his life. Even the last years of the Bible's account do not contain more than his few miracles, a few sermons and finally his crucifixion.

The comprehensiveness of a biography: For a biography to be a perfect whole and a complete model for others, it is essential that it should touch all aspects of human life. What is meant by wholeness here is that different classes or different groups of human society need an ideal example to follow. An individual too, in his various undertakings, his obligations and relations to others needs practical examples to follow. An ideal biography ought to provide that. From this perspective also, we can easily see that no other historical personality comes up to this standard except the last prophet of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

What is religion? It is simply the recognition of one's obligations towards Allah and towards fellow human beings. In other words, carrying out one's duties as ordained by Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all beings. It is only logical and practical then, for the followers of every religion to find out the details of their duties and obligations in the life of their respective founders or Prophets and apply them in their daily life. If you look for man's obligations to Allah and to his fellow beings, you will find them nowhere in such great and complete detail except in the life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him).

In our world, religions are of two kinds: the ones that do not recognize the existence of God, such as Buddhism and Jainism. Therefore there is no mention of God's attributes and what the human beings owe Him. It would be futile to look for such attributes as sincerity, love of God and faith in His Oneness in the life of the founders of these religions. The other kind is those religions that believe in God in one form or the other. However, the available records of the lives of their founders or prophets do not contain the details of their quest for God. In what attributes of God did they believe in? How devoted were they in their belief? Such details are simply not available in their biographies to show us what our belief should be about God. Apart from the Oneness of God, His Commandments, and conditions for offering sacrifice, there is not a single sentence in the whole of Torah to show how devoted Moses was to Allah. There is no mention of the intensity of his love for God, his faith and trust in Him, the deep impression that Allah's glorious attributes left on his heart and his devotion and worship of Allah. Whereas it may be asked if Moses' religion was to be the final religion and for all time, it was the sacred duty of his followers to record all

these details for the benefit of the coming generations. But they failed to do so simply because it was not Allah's intention.

The life of Jesus Christ is mirrored in the Bible. We learn from the gospels that God was the father of Jesus. But we learn nothing about the nature of the relations between the son and the father. Although we get to know that the Father had great love for the son, but it is not clear to what extent was the son's love and devotion for the Father. How did he offer his prayers to Him? Did he ever ask Him for anything other than the daily bread? Was there any night other than the night of his arrest where he is shown to be supplicating and praying to his Lord. If the life history of such a great prophet of Allah like Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him) is so sketchy and devoid of all necessary details, what spiritual benefit can be derived from such a biography? Had the relations between God and His servant been defined and described clearly in Christ's life history, there would have been no need for the first Christian king to hold a Council, of 300 Christian scholars at Nice, some three hundred and fifty years after the death of Christ to decide the matter. Then those relations would not have remained such a riddle up to the present times.

Consider human rights and obligations towards one another. With the only exception of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the biographies of all other prophets and founders of other religions are devoid of this basic value of human life. For instance, Buddha left his wife and immediate family alone and took to the Jungle. He never saw his loving wife and his only son ever again. Cut off from his friends and the burden of ruling his people, he thought he could find peace of mind or nirvana in solitude and that was to be the basic purpose of human life. If Buddha's life was the ideal life, what attraction is there in it for the people of this world which includes kings and their subjects, the rich and the poor, masters and servants, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, friends and foes? Can his life become a model for the worldly traders and Buddhist monks at the same time? That is the reason his own followers never actually followed him, otherwise the flourishing industries and thriving businesses of China, Japan, Thailand, Tibet and Burma would have come to a standstill and their bustling cities would have turned into ruins.

The only outstanding feature of the life of Moses is his leadership in war. Apart from that, his followers cannot find a model for their guidance in their worldly affairs regarding their rights and obligations towards one another. What was his attitude with respect to the family relations, like that of a husband and wife, a father and son, and with respect to brothers and friends? In what useful projects

did he spend his money? How did he treat the sick, the orphans, the wayfarers, the poor and the needy? Are there any details available of his personal example touching these important aspects of human life which his followers could follow? Moses was married; he had children and had a brother and other relatives. It is our faith that being a prophet of Allah his treatment of them must have been perfect and beyond any blemish. Yet, this very important chapter is missing from any available history of his life which could become an example for us to follow.

Jesus Christ had a mother and according to the present version of the Bible he had brothers and sisters and even a physical father. But the available records of his life are silent about his treatment and dealings with them. These very relations have always been the backbone of this worldly life and so will they remain. A major part of religion is concerned with these relationships and obligations towards them. Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him) was never a ruler. Rather, he led the life of the ruled. Therefore, his life does not show any examples of a ruler's duties towards his sub jects. He was never married; His life cannot become a practical example for those couples who are tied into a stronger bond than the one between parents and their children (according to the first chapter of Torah). Since most of this world's people lead a married life, they cannot find a practical example in Christ's life. The worldly aspect of this life is concerned with family relations, monetary deals, affairs of war and peace, dealing with friends and foes. One who remained aloof from all of these affairs cannot become a model for others. If the whole world followed that kind of life today it would soon turn as silent as a graveyard. All kind of progress would stop, and particularly the Christian Europe of today would cease to exist.

Practicability: The last criterion for an ideal model is that his life example should be practical and practicable. What is meant here is that the founder of a religion or the divine law-giver should set a personal example for the discipline he has proposed for others and his personal life should explain and prove to the world that the rules he has set forth are practicable.

It is not too difficult for anyone to present a charming philosophy, an attractive theory, or a fascinating saying. But what is difficult for everyone at all times is to practise what they preach. A person's lofty and pure thoughts his innocent and noble sayings, his moral and ethical philosophies alone cannot make him an ideal and perfect model. This has to be the criterion, otherwise who would be able to tell the good from the bad, and this world would remain a place for only those who have a persuasive tongue and use beautiful words to their advantage. Will you allow me to ask a question at this point? Of the numerous law-givers and

founders of different religions which one can come forward and have the practical aspect of his biography be judged by this standard?

Let us consider some very attractive and charming sayings attributed to Jesus Christ in the present day Bible:

'Love your Lord God with all your heart. Love your enemy. Offer your left cheek to the one who has hit you on the right cheek. One who takes you for forced labour for a mile without wages, go with him for two miles. One who asks you for your coat, give him your shirt too. Give all that you own in charity. Forgive your brother seventy times over. The rich will hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

These and many such sayings are quite attractive. But if they are not accompanied by action, they remain only a combination of persuasive and charming words. How can a person set forth a practical example of forgiveness who has not actually overcome an enemy? How can one look after the poor, the needy and the orphans if he is himself penniless? How could one become a model for a husband a father or other human relations if he himself did not have a wife and children or other relatives? How can one preach the virtue of visiting the sick and the destitute if he has not done so himself? If he has never got an opportunity to overcome his anger and forgive others, his life cannot become a model for those of us who have a quick temper.

There are two sides to an act of virtue, a negative side and a positive side or we may say a passive virtue or an aggressive virtue. For instance, if you were to live like a hermit in the cave of a mountain, all that can be said about your achievement is that you managed to escape from the evil deeds. You did not do anything objectionable. But this is only a passive virtue. You did not stay back in this world to fight evil. Did you fight for the rights of the oppressed against the oppressor? Did you help the poor or feed the needy? Did you try to show the right path to those who had gone astray? Forgiveness, charity, hospitality, pity, supporting a right and a just cause, fulfilling one's obligations and duties as a human being are some of the virtues which make the human conduct truly noble. These virtues are not passive, they are practical. They cannot be achieved by remaining passive and complacent. Noble values came into being through positive action rather than inaction. What we are trying to make clear is the fact that a great human life whose practical aspect is not well known cannot become an ideal life for other human beings to follow. In order to follow a noble principle we need practical examples. We need to have actual deeds in front of us in order to learn and make the right choice in different situations of life such as war and peace; poverty and prosperity; marriage and celibacy; our relations with our

Creator and His creation; with the rulers and the ruled; our conduct in anger and tranquillity, in public and in private etc. The greater part of our life, in fact our whole life, is concerned with these problems and these relationships. In order to deal with them properly we need practical examples, not just words.

I would like you to carefully consider what I have said today. It is not a piece of oratory or poetic exaggeration but a proven and verifiable fact of history that the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is the only life which fulfills all the conditions and standards we have set forth so far.

Please consider my point once more very carefully. What I am trying to say and prove today is that whatever model is chosen from the lives of great men of human history, it must have the following four qualities in order to be the ideal life or the ideal example to be followed by others. It must have authentic historical sources, and it must be comprehensive, perfect and practical. I do not mean to say that the lives of the other prophets of Allah lacked these qualities in their own times. What I am trying to maintain is that whatever remnants of their life histories reached the common people after their period, or the ones existing today, lack the qualities of authenticity, comprehensiveness, perfection and practicality. And that was precisely the demand of the Divine wisdom, so that it should become evident that those prophets were sent at particular periods of time to particular nations. The Divine message given through them was not meant to be universal. Therefore there was no need to preserve it for the other nations and the times to come. Only Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was chosen to be the Prophet for all nations, till the Day of Judgment. He was to be the perfect model, to be followed by every one. That is why his life was preserved to its smallest detail, in its eternal glory and perfection for all times to come. And this fact remains the strongest practical proof of his being "the Seal of Prophets" and of his mission for all mankind. In the words of the holy Quran:

"Muhammad is not a father of any of your men, but he is a messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets….."

(Chp.33:Vrs.40)

Lecture 3. The Historic Aspect of Prophet Muhammad's Life

Let us now consider the life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) in the light of the four criteria set forth in our pervious talk.The first one is "historicity". In this regard, the whole world agrees and marvels at the way the followers of Islam have meticulously preserved not only the record of their Prophet's life but also everything even remotely concerned with his noble personality. There have been narrators and biographers who devoted their life in collecting, recording, classifying and narrating the Prophets sayings, his deeds and everything related to his life. These biographers include his own worthy companions who were his direct disciples, and then those who learnt from them, and then the generation coming immediately after them. In addition, the collectors of the holy Prophet's sayings and his traditions and his biographers include persons up to 4th century since the Prophet's migration to Madinah. When all this heritage was collected, written and arranged, the personal information about each narrator was also recorded which included such important features as the narrator's name and family background, his life history, his moral and ethical conduct, etc. The number of these biographical notes is nearly one hundred thousand. This collection is known as Asma-ur-Rijal.

The well-known German scholar Dr. Springer was in the Indian Education Service in 1854 and was the secretary of Bengal Asiatic Society. In his supervision, Waqidi's Maghazi was published in 1856. It was edited by Von Kremer. The worthy companions of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) were known as Sahabah. Hafiz Ibn Hajar's book 'Isabah Fi Ahwal-as-Sahabah' was published too. Dr. Springer claims that he is the first European ever to have written the Life of Muhammad from original Arabic sources. In his biography he is generally hostile to the Prophet (Peace be upon him). But even he writes (in his introduction to lsabah's English edition in 1864) "There is no nation in the world, nor has there ever been one who can match the Muslims in the art of Asma-ur-Rijal [the historical personal facts about the biographers or reporters of the Prophet's traditions] through which we can find out today the biographical details of half a million reporters." Nearly a hundred thousand Sahaba were present in the Hajj known as the Hajjat-al-Wida'a (Farewel Pilgrimage of the holy Prophet). Eleven thousand of these men have had their names recorded in history because they have reported some of the sayings or deeds of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). This noble service has made them immortal in the pages of history.

The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) passed away in the 11th year of Al-Hijra calendar, which begins with his migration to Madinah. Some of the elder companions of the Prophet were still alive in the 40th year of Al Hijrah. By the 60th year a number of Sahabah who were young in the Prophet's time still lived. By the end of the first century nearly all of the Prophet's worthy companions had died. Here is a list of the last of Sahabah with the times and place of their death.

Name	Place of Death	Year of Death (Hijrah)
Abu Umamah Bahili	Syria	86
Abdullah bin Harith bin Jaram	Egypt	86
Abdullah bin Abi Aufa	Kufah (Iraq)	87
Saib bin Yazeed	Madinah	91
Anas bin Malik	Basrah (Iraq)	93

The last of the Prophet's companions to die was Anas bin Malik who had served the Prophet (Peace be upon him) for ten years as his personal attendant. He died in the 93rd year of Al-Hijrah calendar corresponding to the year 712 of Gregorian calendar.

The students of the Prophet's companions are known in the Islamic history as Tabi een. Their era begins with the first year of Al-Hijrah but they are not considered the Sahaba i.e. the holy Prophet's companions, because they could not receive direct instruction from him, although they were born in his time but could not see him or they were too young to learn. They include Abdur-Rahman bin Harith (born 3 AH), Qais bin Abi Hazim (born 4 AH) and Saeed bin Musayyib who was born in 14th year of Al-Hijrah. A great number of Tabi 'een made it their life's sole mission to spread the teachings of the holy Prophet and the detailed account of his noble life throughout the Islamic world. You can form some idea of the total number of these dedicated men by Ibn Saad's account of the number of Tabi'een in Madinah alone. He classifies them into three groups. The first group includes those who had met the elder companions of the holy Prophet and received direct knowledge about his life from them. Their number comes to 139. Then there are 129 of those who had met the Prophet's companions in Madinah and received instruction from them. The last group comprises 87 of those who had met several, or at least one, companion of the holy Prophet and learned from them the Prophet's traditions. This brings the total number of Tabi'een in one city alone to 355. This indicates a great number of the companions' students who were present in Makkah, Taif, Basrah, Kufah, Damascus and in Yemen and Egypt. Their whole life was dedicated to preaching the holy Prophets mission and teaching his words and deeds. You may also keep in mind the extreme care taken

in recording and reporting the Prophet's traditions from each of his companions. Each companion's reports were carefully counted and classified. The following table gives the names of the elder companions who have reported most of the Prophet's traditions (May Allah be pleased with them all).

Name	Number of Traditions Reported	Year of death (Al-Hijra)
Abu Hurairah	5374	59
Abdullah Bin Abbas	2660	68
Ayeshah	2210	58
Abdullah Bin Umar	1630	73
Jabir Bin Abdullah	1560	78
Anas Bin Malik	1286	93
Abu Saeed Khudri	1170	74

These are the people whose reported traditions are the richest and most dependable source of the biography of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The years of their death show that they were blessed with a long life. It indicates that innumerable students must have benefited first hand from their immense knowledge, and memorized, collected and preserved the Prophet's traditions. In those days, the only knowledge regarded as real was the knowledge divinely revealed to the holy Prophet. Acquiring it earned a person great admiration and prestige. Thousands of the worthy companions of the holy Prophet imparted this knowledge to their families, their relatives and friends. This was the main purpose of their life and they single-mindedly pursued this purpose. They had been inspired by these words of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him): "Pass on to others what ever you hear from me or observe in me." There is another saying of the holy Prophet which calls upon every Muslim to continue the Prophet's mission by spreading the Divine Knowledge to all mankind. It says, "Those who are present [observing me and hearing from me] must pass this Knowledge on to those who do not yet know." That is the reason why immediately after the holy Prophet's companions the younger generation followed in their footsteps and continued the sacred duty of preserving the revealed knowledge. They had to memorize each and every word of the Prophet's traditions, repeat it several times over and preserve it to the letter. The holy Prophet, while urging his follwers to spread the knowledge of his words and deeds, had also warned them of very severe punishment in Hell if anyone deliberately falsified his traditions or misquoted him. As a result, many highly esteemed Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with them all used to tremble with fear when they were reporting a tradition lest they should make a mistake. It is said of

Abdullah bin Masoud (May Allah be pleased with him) that he went white while reporting a saying of the holy Prophet and then said that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) had said like that or something nearly like that.

The early Arabs were naturally gifted with a very strong memory. It was part of their tradition to memorize and recite epic poems consisting of hundreds of couplets. Besides, it is Allah's law in nature that the greater a faculty is used and practised the stronger it gets. The Sahabah and their disciples had got their power of retention to the pinnacle of perfection. They used to commit to memory each event of the Prophet's life and each one of his sayings the way the Muslims of today learn the holy Quran by heart. A Muhaddith (a scholar of the Prophet's traditions) used to learn thousands or even hundreds of thousands of the Prophet's sayings by heart and retain them. Though later, people used to write them too as an extra precaution, but this was considered a weakness amongst the learned circles. So they used to hide their written notes lest people should think they no longer knew their traditions by heart

Gentlemen! Some orientalists and Christian missionaries led by Sir William Muir and Goldzier have challenged the credibility of the Prophet's traditions and have tried to create doubts about their authenticity and truthfulness by claiming that their writing and collection began 90 years after the holy Prophet's death. However we have already explained to you fully how the holy Prophet's companions, the Sahabah (May Allah be pleased with them all), considered the knowledge imparted to them as a sacred trust, how they strived to meticulously preserve it and keep it unaltered, and then passed it onto the next generation. Therefore, there is absolutely no room for any doubt regarding the truthfullness of the sayings of the holy Prophet, even though the written form of the traditions came a little later.

The Sahaba (May Allah bless them) did not think it proper to put the traditions in the written form for three reasons.

1) Initially, the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) had forbidden them to put anything into writing except the holy Quran while it was being revealed by Allah. He had said, "Do not write anything that you hear from me except the holy Quran." The idea was to save the common people from mixing up the word of Allah with the sayings of the Prophet (Peace he upon him). Later, when the holy Quran had been fully preserved among the Muslims, the Prophet himself permitted his Sahabah to write down his sayings. Even then certain Sahabah avoided the written form out of extreme caution.

2) The Sahabah (May Allah bless them) were afraid that if the details of the Prophet's life and his sayings were put in the written form, the coming generations will not pay due attention and importance to learning by heart and preserving the traditions. It will make them too lax and lazy to attain this knowledge. Their fears proved to be true. The later history of the Muslims proves that with the transfer of knowledge from the bosoms to the books, their insight and piety gradually declined. The Sahabah (May Allah bless them) were also mindful of the fact that anyone who might get hold of a few books, would claim to be a scholar of the holy Prophet's traditions. There too, history has proved them right.

3) The third reason was that Arabs were proud of their exceptionally strong memory and it was still considered a sign of weakness to resort to writing for preserving a historical event. Even if they wrote something they preferred to keep it a secret. The scholars of the Prophet's traditions believed that the oral tradition was a great deal safer than writing in order to preserve the sacred knowledge they held in trust. The written work is vunerable to the tricks of the forgerers, whereas the word imprinted on the heart is indelible. It is safe from any sort of change or outside interference.

Today let me reveal to you, and it is being established for the first time here in this meeting with you, that it is absolutely baseless to claim that for a period of 90 or 100 years the job of preserving the holy Prophets biographical details and his sayings was limited to oral traditions alone. The real reason behind this misconception is that chronologically the first written collection of the holy Prophet's sayings is considered to be Imam Malik's Muatta, and the first of his biographies is said to be Ibn Ishaq's Al-Maghazi, The two scholars were contemporary and died in the Hijrah years 179 and 151 respectively. That is why the first written collection of the holy Prophet's traditions is deemed to have started in the beginning of the second century of the Hijrah calendar. However, there is sound historical evidence to prove that this work had started a lot earlier than that. Umar bin Abdul Aziz died in 101 AU. He was himself an eminent scholar and had been the governor of Madinah. He became caliph in 99 AH. During his tenure as the caliph he wrote to Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Amr bim Hazm, (the Qadi of Madinah and a great scholar and authority on the holy Prohpet's traditions) and ordered him to begin the work on compiling the sayings and traditions of the holy Prophet. The reason he gave for his order was his fear of the loss of valuable information with the passage of time. This event is recorded in Bukhari, Mu 'atta and Musnad Darimi, reported to be among the most authentic sources of the holy Prophet's traditions. This executive order was

carried out. An account of the holy Prophet's life, his sayings and deeds was written and compiled. It was brought to the capital and submitted to Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Later, several copies of this collection were made and sent to all the major cities of the Islamic world. Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Amr bin Hazrn was chosen for the job because he was not only the Qadi of Madinah, the centre of learning, but an Imam (an authority on religious knowledge). Besides, his aunt Amrah was a prominent disciple of Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her), the holy Prophet's wife and one of the most reliable sources of his traditions. Amrah's reports were based on the authority of Ayeshah. This collection was already safe with Abu Bakr bin Hazm when he was asked by the Caliph to collect and classify the traditions and pay particular attention to those reported by the holy Prophet's wife Ayeshah (MayAllah be pleased with her).

The written heritage of the Prophet's Era

We can further claim and prove that the written work of collecting and preserving the accounts of the sayings and deeds and teachings of the holy Prophet had started even in his own time. On the occasion of his triumphant return to Makkah, he had given a sermon, it is reported in the chapter titled "The Written Form of Knowledge" in Al-Bukhari (the most authentic book after the holy Quran) that Abu Shah, one of the Prophet's companions from Yemen, had asked for that sermon and got it in the written form. The holy Prophet had sent several letters to different emperors and rulers of the world inviting them to come to the fold of Islam. He had had them all written. Several years ago one of those letters has been found intact. This was sent to Muqauqis, the ruler of Egypt. It was found preserved in the cover of a book in a church in Egypt. It is believed to be exactly the same letter dictated by the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The photocopies of this letter are generally available. It is in the ancient Arabic script and the contents and the Seal are confirmed by several traditions reported through different sources. This is one of the proofs of the authenticity of Islamic tradition.

Abu Hurairah, one of the elder Sahabah and most prominent narrators of the holy Prophet's traditions, says that no one knows the holy Prophet's sayings more than he does except Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-Aas. The reason he gives for that is that Abdullah bin Amr used to write everything he had heard from the Prophet whereas Abu Hurairah did not (quoted in Al Bukhari). It is also narrated in two of the most reliable and authentic books of the holy Prophet's traditions i.e. Abu Dawoud and Musnad Ibn Hanbal, that once Abdullah bin Amr (May Allah be pleased with him) was asked why he wrote down everything the holy Prophet had said. He might have said some things in a state of anger. On bearing this,

Abdullah bin Amr gave up writing the traditions but mentioned this incident to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The Prophet pointed towards his mouth and said, “Keep writing. Nothing comes out of this mouth except the truth.” Abdullah bin Amr had named this collection Sadiqah (meaning “the truthful”). He used to say, “There are only two things in my life which inspire me to live on. One of them is Sadiqah and it is that noble collection of the holy Prophet’s sayings which I have heard from him myself.” (Quoted by Darimi). Mujahid says that we saw a book with Abdullah bin Amr and asked him what it was. He said, “this is Sadiqah which I have collected by listening to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), no third person was involved at all’, quoted by Ibn Sa’ad (2-2-125). There is no dearth of evidence to prove that the writing of the holy Prophet’s traditions had begun in his own life time, despite the fact that his Arab followers considered it a weaker form of preserving and protecting them and preferred to memorize them. It is quoted in Al-Bukhari that after his arrival in Madinah, the holy Prophet held a census of the Muslims in the city. The total number of Muslims was 1500 at that time.

The rules of Zakat i.e. the obligatory alms-giving, how it was to be collected and at what rate etc. were dictated by the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). These instructions were written and sent to different collectors. Abu Bakr Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) the first Caliph, kept a copy of those with him (Darqutni Kitab-uz-Zakah). The fourth Caliph and the holy Prophet’s cousin Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) used to keep with him a document containing many teachings and instructions of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He showed it to people on their request (Al-Bukhari). The peace agreement between the Muslims and the non-Muslim Quraish of Makkah was written by Ali at Hudaibiyah, a copy of which was given to the Quraish and the holy Prophet kept the other himself (Ibn Sa’ad, Al-Maghazi, p.71). When the holy Prophet appointed Amr bin Hazm the ruler of Yemen, he was given detailed instructions about his duties, obligations, charity etc. They were all in the written form. Abdullah bin Al-Hakim, another of the holy Prophet’s companions, received written instructions from him about dealing with dead animals (Tabrani). When a companion of the holy Prophet, Wael bin Hajr (May Allah be pleased with him) was returning home (to Hadur-Maut in Yemen) a special letter was written for him in which the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) had given him instructions regarding obligatory prayer, fasting, usuary, thinking, etc. (Tabrani, p.242). Once Umar bin Khattab, the second Caliph (May Allah be pleased with him) asked a group of people if anyone knew the amount of money sanctioned by the holy Prophet as a compensation payable to the widow of a deceased. Dhahhak bin Sufyan stood up and said he

knew it because they had received the holy Prophet's instructions in this regard in the written form (Darqutni, p.485)

Umar bin Abdul Aziz ruled as a Caliph from 99 AH to 101 AH. He needed the holy Prophet's written instructions regarding Zakat. He sent his messenger to Madinah in search of that document. It was found with the descendants of Amr bin Hazm (Darqutni, p.45l). Some of the Prophet's written instructions sent to the people of Yemen included these problems: the holy Quran may be touched only in a state of purity; a slave cannot be set free by his new owner before the deal is closed; there is no divorce before the completion of the marriage contract (Darimi, p.293). Ma'az bin Jabal asked from Yemen if Zakah was payable on growing vegetables. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) sent a written reply forbidding him to take the Zakat on that (Darqutni, p.45) When the Umayyad Caliph Marwan declared in one of his sermons that Makkah was sacred, Rafea bin Khudaij, a companion of the holy Prophet, called out "So too is Madinah. And I have a written ruling. Would you like me to read it out to you?" (Ibn Hanbal, p.l 41). Dhahhak bin Qais wrote to the holy Prophets companion, Nu'man bin Bashir asking him, what chapter of the Quran was usually recited by the holy Prophet during the Friday prayers, apart from the chapter called Al Jumah. He wrote him back saying it was "Hal Ata-ka ..." (Muslim, p.323). Caliph Umar bin Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him) wrote to Utbah bin Farqad informing him that the holy Prophet had forbidden [male followers] from wearing clothes made of pure silk (Muslim, p. 307).

These are some of the rulings and instructions that the holy Prophet had got written and sent to various people on different occasions. There is evidence to prove that many of the senior companions of the holy Prophet wanted to compile or actually did compile his sayings and traditions in the form of a book. For instance, the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) compiled a number of sayings during his rule but later did not like having them written and destroyed the collection. Caliph Uinar considered this matter deeply but finally could not dare to have the traditions written (lest it should be considered an innovation in religion). You have already heard that Abdullah bin Amr had prepared a collection of the holy Prophet's sayings and had written them down with his permission Many people used to come to see this collection and he used to show it to them (Tirmizi, p.38). A major portion of Caliph Ali's rulings in legal matters was presented to Abdullah bin Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) and it was in the written form. The traditions narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas were written and collected. One such collection was brought to him by the people of Taif and read out to him [for his approval and confirmation] (Tirmizi,

p.691). Saeed bin Jubair used to write the holy Prophet sayings narrated by Abdullah bin Abbas (Darimi, p.69). Abdullah bin Amr's collection, Sadiqah, remained in the custody of his grandson Amr bin Shoaib, but he was considered a weak link in the chain of narrators because he used to read out from his grandfather's collection rather than depend on his own memory. Wahab (a Tabi'ee) had compiled the sayings reported by the holy Prophet's companion Jabir bin Abdullah. It was in the possession of Ismail bin Abdul Karim. Another collection reported by Jabir bin Abdullah was prepared by Sulaiman bin Qais Yashkuri. Abu Zubair, Abu Sufyan, and Sha'bi who belong to the second generation after the holy Prophet's companions and are regarded as Imams of Hadith had heard Jabir's collection from Jabir himself. Samrah bin Jundab is a companion of the holy Prophet. His son, Sulaiman, used to quote from him. Later, his grandson, Habeeb, quoted from the same collection. No one from the holy Prophet's companions had committed to memory a greater number of his sayings than Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him). Some of these traditions were compiled by Humam bin Munabbih. This collection is known as Sahifat Humam (Humam's collection). Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal has copied it in his famous "Musnad' (pp.312-318). Bashir bin Nuhaik wrote a collection of traditions from Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) then got his permission to narrate them. Once, Abu Hurairah entertained a guest at his place and showed him a few pages saying those were some of the holy Prophet's traditions which he used to report. The narrator of this incident says that those pages were not in Abu Hurairah's handwriting but written by someone else (Fath Al-Bari).

Another of the holy Prophet's closest companion is Anas bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him). He has reported a great number of the holy Prophet's traditions. He used to say to his sons: "My children! Preserve this knowledge in written form". Abban, one of his students used to take down the traditions from him. A woman by the name of Salma reports that she had witnessed Abdullah bin Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) writing down the holy Prophet's traditions from his personal servant Abu Rafea. Waqdi one of the earliest biographers of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) reports that he himself saw the letter among Ibn Abbas's books which the holy Prophet had sent to the ruler of Amman, Munzir bin Sawee. A detailed report of the famous battle of Badr was written by Urwah bin Zubair and sent to Caliph Abdul Malik bin Marwan.

Abdullah bin Masoud was so close to the holy Prophet that he was considered to be a member of the holy Prophet's family. He had the permission to call upon the holy Prophet at any time. He considered it incorrect to preserve anything in

writing except the holy Quran. He used to complain that people came to him to learn from him the holy Prophet's sayings and then went home and put them in writing. Saeed bin Jubair, an eminent Tabi'ee says that he used to learn the holy Prophet's traditions from Abdullah bin Umar and Abdullah bin Abbas, take down notes and would make a fair copy the following morning. Several people used to learn the holy prophet's traditions from one of his companions, Bra'a bin Azib and would write them down in his presence. Nafea, who served Ibn Umar (May Allah be pleased with them all) for 30 years, used to dictate the holy prophet's traditions to people. Once, Abdur-Rahman the son of Abdullah bin Masoud, showed a collection of the holy Prophet's traditions to people, testifying that they were absolutely authentic. Saeed bin Jubair says that whenever a difference arose between him and his colleagues regarding certain details of a particular tradition, they would come to Ibn Umar for guidance and verification but would hide from him their notes because he strongly disapproved of writing down the holy Prophet's traditions. Aswad, a Tab'ee says he found a written collection of traditions. He, along with his friend Ilqamah, presented it to Ibn Umar but he destroyed it. Zaid bin Thabit is one of those companions of the holy Prophet who used to write down the verses of the holy Quran as they were revealed, and the Prophet would dictate them to him. He too, did not like the people recording the holy Prophet's traditions in the written form. Once, Marwan requested him to recite the holy Prophet's traditions and secretly arranged for some scribes to sit behind a curtain and write down everything that Zaid narrated. Caliph Muawiyyah (May Allah be pleased with him) tried the same method but this time Zaid found out and had the written record destroyed.

Gentlemen! You might have been overwhelmed by the abundance of unfamiliar names and the great number of authentic sources quoted by me here. But rest assured, we have reached a point where the path ahead looks straight and clear. I have tried to show, through these references and quotations, that if the written heritage is the only dependable source to the modern mind, the holy Prophet's worthy companions collected enough of it with their own hands and passed it onto the next generation. In their turn, they preserved it and included it in their own books. Now, we would like to say that in the very life time of the holy Prophet's companions their disciples had begun, researched and compiled the traditions, the incidents and the records of the holy Prophet's life. They collected and verified this information by asking each and every man and woman, young or old, who knew any thing at all about any aspect of the holy Prophet's life. Amongst the hundreds of Tabi'een who contributed to this noble mission, by collecting even the minutest details of the holy Prophet's biography are such dedicated, painstaking and eminent scholars as Muhammad bin Shihab Zuhri,

Hisham bin Urwah, Qais bin Abi Hazim, Ata bin Abi-Ribah, Saeed bin Jubair and Abu Zunnad (May Allah be pleased with them all). Shihab Zuhri is considered to be one of the greatest authorities on the subject of the holy Prophet's traditions and his biography. He is a true Imam of Hadith and Seerah. He used to write down each and every thing about the holy Prophet's life. Abu Zunnad says that while he and his colleagues noted and collected the Prophet's rulings regarding only the lawful and the unlawful things, Zuhri would make a note of everything he learnt about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Ibn Kaisan says that he and Zuhri were fellow students. He says that he decided only to collect and write what concerned the holy Prophet because he considered only this knowledge as Sunnah (the holy Prophet's tradition) Zuhri told him to write about the holy Prophet's companions as well, because he regarded that information too as part of Sunnah. Ibn Kaisan says that he disagreed with Zuhri on that point. He says the result was disastrous for him, whereas Zuhri reached great heights of scholarship. Imam Zuhri is only one of the hundreds of Tabi'een who collected and wrote down these records. He had written so profusely that, after the death of the Ummayyad Caliph Waleed bin Yazeed, a good number of beasts of burden were required to transport his works to a government office.

Imam Zuhri was born in the year 50 AH and died in 124 AH. His ancestors were Qureish, the same as the holy Prophet's. He collected the holy Prophet's sayings and traditions in their smallest details with extreme diligence, dedication and care. According to the historians he would go to every Ansari's house in Madinah Munawwarah door to door and would talk to as many men, women, and children he could possibly meet, asking them if they knew any thing at all about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He would then carefully note down whatever he had learnt from them. In those days many of the holy Prophet's close companions were still alive, who had received direct knowledge and instruction from him. Therefore, Imam Zuhri was able to collect first hand information from them. He has a long list of his own students who were busy day and night collecting, verifying, classifying, recording, teaching and spreading the knowledge they had gained about the holy Prophet's life and his mission. This was their life's only ambition and these dedicated men had given up every thing else in life for the sake of this noble work.

There is a certain fallacy regarding the collection and classification of the literature about the holy Prophet's life, his sayings and traditions. It is believed that this work was begun by the Tabi'een. Their era lasted for about a hundred years. Since the Tabi'een's era supposedly began a hundred years after the holy Prophet's death, it is concluded that the work about his life and mission was

begun a hundred years later. Historically this is absolutely baseless. As has been said earlier, by definition a Tabi'ee is a person who did not receive direct instruction from the holy Prophet but saw his companions, the Sahabah, and learned from them. Some Tabi 'een were born in the holy Prophet's lifetime but were too young to receive any education from him. Others were born after his death (11 AH). They are all included in Tabi'een. Looking at it from this perspective we can say that the Tabi 'een's era began in or around 11 AH and it actually ended with the passing away of the last companion of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) which is a period of about 100 years. The end of this time meant the end of the Tabi'een's period because to be called a Tabi'ee meant having seen one of the holy Prophet's companions. Hence the work that actually began since the 11th year of AI-Hijra (the year of the holy Prophets death) cannot be deemed to have begun in the second century. If credit is given to the Tabi'een it does not mean that when they began their work, a hundred years had passed or every companion of the holy Prophet had left this world.

As a matter of fact there are three phases in which the work of gathering information about the holy Prophet's life, his sayings, his traditions and his message, and its classification and recording was accomplished. In the first phase every person gathered first hand information individually and compiled and preserved it personally. In the second phase data was collected from each city where the holy Prophet's companions had spread. In the third phase, information was collected from all over the Muslim world, and arranged and recorded in the form of the present day books. The first phase lasted about a hundred years (up to 100 AR). It corresponds to the period of the holy Prophet's worthy companions and their senior disciples, the Tabi'een. The second phase lasted up to 150 AH. It corresponds to the time of those scholars who received direct instruction from the Tabi'een. The third phase extends to the third century of Al-Hijra which belongs to such eminent scholars of Islam as Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Tirmizi and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (May Allah be pleased with them all). The complete heritage of the first phase is found preserved in the books of the following generation which in turn has been entirely passed on into the books of the third phase. The hundreds of thousands of pages containing this noble heritage today have been derived from the books belonging to the second and the third generation. This is undoubtedly the most valuable and the most reliable literature of world history, unmatched and unparalled in human culture and a fact acknowledged by both friends and foes of Islam.

According to my eminent teacher, a scholar and historian of great repute, whenever other [non-muslim] nations of the world have tried to write their

history from an oral tradition, this is what they have done. The events are recorded a long time after their occurance. All kinds of stories are recorded without checking their sources or their credibility. In some cases absolutely nothing is known of the people narrating a particular event. Then out of those myths some events are selected which seem reasonable and likely to have happened and others are discarded. After a while the stories attain the status of history. The ancient European history is no exception to this way of recording history,

On the other hand, the Muslims have set up a very strict and a very high standard of recording the biography of their holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and have turned it into an art form. The first principle of this disci pline was to record an event in the words of a person who was himself part of that event or had personally witnessed it. If he was not an eye witness, he would record the names of all the persons narrating that particular event up to the person who had eye-witnessed it. Then he would record personal information about everyone included in the chain of narration, This usually included such details as to the name of the reporters, who they were, what they did, what they were like, what their moral character was like, whether they were intelligent or not, whether they were trustworthy or unreliable, if they were superficial or given to deep thought, if they were well-versed in knowledge or simply ignorant etc. It was extremely difficult to collect such minute and exact details about every person who had narrated a tradition. But thousands of dedicated Muslim scholars spent a lifetime compiling this information. They travelled from city to city only to meet personally a narrator of the holy Prophet's traditions, gathering detailed information about them. Through their untiring research they were able to invent a new art form in Islamic literature known as Asma-ur-Rijal. Today it enables us to know the biographical details of over a hundred thousand people who took part in narrating a tradition of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

This principle was meant only to judge the truthfulness and credibility of a narrator. There were other rules by critics too, laid down to evaluate a particular tradition regarding its accuracy from a historical and rational point of view. The Muslim scholars of the holy Prophet's traditions were totally impartial and objective in their assessent of the narrators of the tradition. In their judgment they were so honest, fair and fearless that the Muslim nation can rightly be proud of them. Among the narrators of the holy Prophet's traditions there were noble caliphs and powerful rulers, great leaders of men who were held in great awe and respect by their people. But the scholars of holy Prophet's traditions were not impressed by their wordly station and gave everyone a fair judgment and due

respect, no more no less. Their history is full of many illustrious and glorious examples. Imam Wakea was a great scholar of hadith. Apart from being an eminent scholar, his father held an important position in the government (which in modem terms may be described as Secretary of Treasury). Imam Wakea was so careful in quoting from his father that he always mentioned another source in support of his father's narration. He would never quote a tradition on his father's authority alone simply because he held a high office in the government. Can there be a better example of being so honest, careful and objective? Masoudi is another great scholar of Hadith. In the year 154 AH (770 AD) Imam Muaz bin Muaz noticed that Masoudi needed to consult his notes-while narrating a tradition of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He at once declared his dissatisfaction with Masoudi's authority as a narrator of hadith because he considered it a weakness of memory on the part of Masoudi. Imam Muaz is known to have rejected ten thousand dinars offered to him for remaining neutral in the case of a person whom he had judged to be unreliable. He disdainfully rejected the money saying he could never be the one to conceal the truth. It would be hard to find in history a better example of integrity and care in the reporting of historical facts.

However, what is still more amazing is the fact that all the information which formed the basis of the holy Prophet's biography is available today. Muslim scholars have preserved every incident of his life along with their assessment of the status of the narrators whether he is to be considered authentic, reliable, wrong, right, not so reliable, strong or weak in his reporting of a particular event. The whole data is there for anyone to sift through and judge every tradition's truthfulness by applying the same strict rules the Muslim biographers have applied to tell the wrong from the right. Gentlemen! These historical details and references might appear to you somewhat dull and painstaking because I have devoted a considerable amount of my lecture explaining these facts. But, I believe it was worth while to bring home to you the historic aspect of the holy Prophet's biography and the soundness and reliability of its sources. Now I would like to put to you what formed the basis of the biography of the holy Prophet and - how these sources were arranged and used. The most important, the most authentic and the noblest part of his biography is, of course, the part which has been based on the holy Quran. It is a source whose veracity and dependability has not been successfully challenged yet, even by the adversaries of Islam. This part of his biography which is based on the authority of the holy Quran includes all the main features of his life.

His life before he was ordained a prophet, his being an orphan and poor, his search for the truth, his prophethood, the Divine revelation, his declaration of his mission and preaching, his ascension to the heavens, the enmity of the non-believers, his migration to Madinah, his battles, his character, in short every significant event of his life has been referred to in the holy Quran. This has made his biography the most authentic life history that exists in the history of mankind. It simply has no parallel.

The second source of his biography is the Ahadith or the traditions of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). These traditions come to be close to a hundred thousand. They have been sorted out and classified (depending on their chain of narration) as absolutely authentic; slightly less so; and the ones that are not the genuine sayings of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The most authentic and reliable are known as Sehah Sitta. They consist of six books, compiled by highly regarded scholars after a very careful assessment of each and every tradition included in this collection. Then there are collections of traditions known as Masaneed. The biggest and the best known of these collections belongs to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (May Allah be pleased with him). It consists of six volumes. Each volume contains no less than five hundred pages written in the small Egyptian hand writing. These volumes contain the traditions reported by the holy Prophet's companions and each companion's narration has been mentioned separately. They are a mixture of the events of holy Prophet's life and his teachings.

The third source is known as Maghazee. They are books that mostly give an account of the wars and battles in which the holy Prophet took part himself. Some other incidents have also been mentioned. Some of the well- known Maghazee include that of Urwah bin Zubair (died in 94AH/ 712AD) Imam Zuhri's Maghazee (124 AH/ 741AD), Maghazee of Musa bin Uqbah (141 AH/ 758AD), Maghazee by Ibn Ishaq (150 AH/ 767 AD), by Ziad Al Bakai (182 AH/ 798AD) and Waqidi's Maghazee (207 AH/ 825 AD). These are some of the oldest sources of the holy Prophet's biography.

The fourth source is the books of Islamic history whose early sections deal with the events of the holy Prophet's life. Among these books, the most reliable ones with accuracy of detail are: Tabaqat by Ibn Saad (died 230 AH/ 844 AD), Tareekh-ar-Rusul Wal-Maluk by Al-Tabari, two books by Imam Bukhari, Al-Tareekh Al-Kabeer and Al-Tareekh Al-Sagheer and works of Ibn Habban and Ibn Abi Khuthaimah.

The fifth source is a collection of books known as Kutub-ad-Da-la-il which deal with miracles and spiritual highlights of the holy Prophet's life. They include works like Da-la-il Al-Nu-buwah by Ibn Qutaibah (died 255AH), Da-la-il Imam Baihaqi (died 430AH), Da-la-il Abu Nuaim Isphahani (died 430AH), Da-la-il Mustaghfiri (died 432AH), Da-la-il Abul Qasim Ismail Isphahani (died 535AH). But the most comprehensive book on this subject remains Kha-sa-is Al-Kub-ra by Jalal-ud-Deen Sayyuti.

Then there are the books called Sha-ma-il. They are concerned with the morals, manners and details of the dignified daily routine of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The first and the best known of these is Imam Tirmizi's book called Kitab-Ash-Sha-ma-il who died in 279AH. Many eminent scholars have since written commentaries and explanatory notes on this book. However, the biggest book on this subject has been written by Qadi Iyadh. His book is called Al-Shifa Fi Huquq Al-Mustafa and its commentary has been written by Shihab Khafaji which is called Naseem Ar-Riyadh. There are some other books too, such as Sha-ma-il An-Nabi by Abul Abbas (died 432AH), Sha-ma-il An-nur-As-Satea by Ibn Al Muqri Gharnati (died 252AH) and Safar Al-Sa 'adah by Mujaddid Al-Deen Ferozabadi (died 817AH).

Apart from the above mentioned sources there are books that deal with the history of the two holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. They include some details of the Prophet's life while he lived there, and point to the local sights which are associated with him in any manner. The oldest of these works are Akh-ba-ri Makkah by Al-Azraqi (died 223AH), Akh-ba-ri Madinah by Umar bin Shaiba (262AH), Fikihi's Akh-ba-ri Makkah and Ibn Zabalah's Akh-ba-ri Madinah.

Gentlemen! The historical data of the noble biography of the holy Prophet, that I have presented to you in today's Lecture, can give a fair idea to the friends and foes alike of the holy Prophet about the historical status of his biography and the soundness and authenticity of its sources. The earliest Muslim biographers did not remain content with the oral or written evidence mentioned so far. But, in order to protect and preserve this immense amount of knowledge for the future generations, they established special institutions. These were dedicated for the teaching and training of specialists, Special scholars were taught the Maghazee in these study circles and a number of eminent scholars of the holy Prophet's traditions were produced by them. For instance Qatada (May Allah be pleased with him) was the holy Prophet's companion. His grandson, Asim bin Omer was an authority on Maghazee (died 121 AH). He used to teach the Maghazee in one of the study circles in the great mosque of Damascus. He had been instructed to

do so by Caliph Umar bin Abdul-Aziz. Since the blessed time of the holy Prophet to our day, thousands upon thousands of books have been written about his life and teachings in different languages, in different countries, at different times. Urdu, a language of the Indian subcontinent, has a written tradition of no more than 200 years. In fact, no worthwhile written work exists in this language before 1857. Yet, hundreds of books, big or small, have been written about the holy Prophet's life and his message in Urdu.

Leave aside the Muslims whose very faith and love for the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) demands that they serve this cause with dedication. Come to his adversaries. In India, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Brahmo Samajis have written the Prophet's biographies. In Europe, which does not claim any love for the Prophet, books have been written on the "Life of Muhammad" either to serve the Christian missionary or to satisfy their taste for knowledge or world history. A few years ago, it was mentioned in a literary magazine of Damascus, called Al-Muqtabas, that 1300 books have been published so far in various European languages about the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him). Add to it the number of books published about him upto the present time and you can get some idea of the interest shown by the non-Muslims in his biography. No book in English is more poisonous and hostile than Professor D.S. Margoliouth's "Muhammad" published in 1905 as part of the series "Heroes of the Nations." The author is a professor of Arabic at Oxford University. This man has distorted nearly every event in the holy Prophet's biography. Yet, even he could not help admitting in the introduction of his book: "....The biographers of Prophet Muhammad form a long series which is impossible to end, but in which it would be honourable to find a place", [Muhammad and Rise of Islam New York, 1905, p1]. John Devenport adopts a more sympathetic attitude. He begins his book "Apology for Muhammad and the Quran" (1870) with the acknowledgment that "Undoubtedly there is not a single law-giver or conqueror in the history of the world whose biography is more detailed and truer than that of Muhammad." Rev. Bosworth Smith, fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, gave a series of lectures on the subject of "Muhammad and Muhammadanism" at the Royal Institute of Great Britain in 1874. These lectures were later compiled in the form of a book. How well does he state in this book:

"And, what is true of religion generally is also true, unfortunately, of those three religions which I have called, for want of a better name, historical—and of their founders. We know all too little of the first and the earliest laborers; too much, perhaps, of those who have entered into their labours. We know less of Zoroaster and Confucius than we do of Solon and Socrates; less of Moses and Buddha than

we do of Ambrose and Augustine. We know indeed some fragments of a fragment of Christ's life; but who can lift the veil of the thirty years that prepared the way for the three? What we do know indeed has renovated a third of the world, and may yet renovate much more; an ideal of life at once remote and near; possible and impossible, but how much we do not know! What do we know of his mother, of his home life, of his early friends, of his relation to them, of the gradual dawning, or, it may be, the sudden revelation, of his divine mission? How many questions about him occur to each of us which must always remain questions?

But in Mohammadanism everything is different; here instead of the shadowy and the mysterious we have history. We know as much of Muhammad as we do even of Luther and Milton. The mythical, the legendry, the supernatural is almost wanting in the original Arab authorities, or all events can easily be distinguished from what is historical. Nobody here is the dupe of himself or of others. There is full light of day upon all that light can ever reach at all."

The Muslims have written thousands of books about the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and are still writing. Each one of these biographies is clearer, better documented, more reliable and has firmer historical sources than that of any other prophet of God. The early books about the holy Prophet's life and teachings were learnt by hundreds even thousands of people from their original authors. They heard them from the original sources, read them and understood them to the letter, and then reported them to others. Six hundred pupils of Imam Malik, the author of the first compilation of traditions known as Mu'atta, learnt it directly from him. The audiance included the rulers and governors, scholars, researchers, literary persons, writers and people from all walks of life. Imam Bukhari's Saheeh Al-Bukhari is regarded the most reliable book after the holy Quran. Sixty thousand people learnt it directly from Firbary, just one of the Imam's numerous students. Can such care, such accuracy and soundness of sources, ever be matched by the life history of any other prophet or founder of a religion? This historicity was to be the lot of none other than Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah. May Allah send His Blessings and Peace upon him.

Lecture 4. The Perfectness of the Holy Prophet's Life

My dear friends! The subject of today's lecture is the perfectness of a biography. No life can serve as a model unless it shows perfectness in all aspects, even if it were based on historically sound and reliable sources. No life can be adjudged perfect and free of all shortcomings unless all its details are available to us. Looking at the life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) from this perspective, we find that every significant moment of his life from birth to death was known to the people of his time, and since then has been preserved in the history of the world. There has not been a single span of time from his whole life that remained unknown to his people.

His birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, manhood; his business deals, his travels; his marriage; his friends before his Prophethood; his participation in the fight of the Qureish and the subsequent peace treaty; the title of "Trustworthy" given to him by his people (prior to his Prophethood); his amicable solution to the problem of fixing the sacred stone in the holy Ka'bah and thus avoiding a great bloodshed amongst the Qureish; his gradual withdrawal from the then corrupt society of Makkah and retreat to the Mount Hera outside the city; his contemplation and the first revelation of the Word of God; the advent of Islam; his call to Allah, his preaching of the Divine message; the opposition of the elite of Makkah; his journey to Taif; the Meraj (his ascendence to the Heavens); his migration to Madinah; his battles against the non-believers; the Peace Treaty of Hudaybiyah; his letters to various rulers of the World calling them to embrace Islam; serving Allah, the Creator and Nourisher of the Universe; the Spread of Islam; the completion and perfection of the Divine Message; his Final Pilgrimage to Makkah and his death; in short every one of these events is before the whole world, clear and complete to the smallest detail. There is not a single aspect of his life hidden from history. Even the false and fabricated stories about him have been preserved and passed down to history by his Muslim biographers so that everybody could see the truth from false hood, the right from the wrong, and then form their own independent opinion. Sometimes one wonders why his Muslim biographers have saved the fabricated traditions together with the authentic traditions or the ones that show a weak link in the chain of narrators of those particular traditions. Perhaps there is a hand of Providence in that so that none of his opposers could say that his followers have tried to cover up the alleged weakness of their Prophet (Peace be upon him) by omitting certain traditions, like the objection raised against the Christian literature these days. Therefore, our worthy scholars have collected and presented the whole literature, including the fabricated reports about their Prophet (Peace be upon him) and

have set down rules and produced historical evidence to tell the difference between the false and the true traditions.

Every detail of the holy Prophet's life, as clear as the daylight, is known, written and preserved in books. Even the everyday routine is recorded, such as his manner of sitting and standing, sleeping and waking up; his marriage and children; his friends and companions; his praying and fasting; his worship during the day and night; his wars and peace; his travels; his manner of washing, bathing, eating, drinking; smiling, weeping, walking, talking; his jokes; his privacy, his public appearances, his manner of meeting others; his habits; his personal appearance even the intimate relations between a husband and wife. At this point I would like to read out to you one of the oldest biographies of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The book deals with the personal features of his personality and is recognized as one of the best and most authentic on the subject. I will only read out the subtitles from a chapter of this book known as Sha-ma-il Al-Tirmizi.

- The holy Prophel's personal appearance
- His hair
- His comb
- The number of gray hairs
- His hair-dye
- His use of an eye cleansing substance
- His clothes
- His daily life
- His socks
- His shoes
- His ring
- His sword
- His armour
- His helmet
- His headress
- His trousers
- His manner of walking
- How he shielded his face with a piece of cloth
- His manner of sitting
- His bed and pillow
- How he leaned back on his pillow
- His food
- His bread
- The meat and soup that he ate

- His manner of washing for prayers
- The prayers he said before and after eating something
- The bowl he used
- The kinds of fruit he ate
- What he drank
- How he drank
- His use of perfume
- His manner of talking
- The way he recited poetry
- His way of telling stories at bedtime
- His manner of sleeping
- His manner of worship
- The way he smiled
- His sense of humour
- His prayers in the early morning
- His performance of optional prayers at home
- His fasting
- His recitation of the holy Quran
- His weeping and crying
- His bed
- His modesty
- His kind manners
- His hair-cut
- His names
- His life style
- His age
- His death
- What he left behind after his death

All of these subtitles are concerned with his personal life and under each one several traditions have been collected to create a very clear, detailed and bright image of his personality. Not a single minute of the holy Prohpet's life was hidden. At home he was surrounded by his family and children and outside he used to be among his followers and friends.

My dear friends! Even the greatest of heroes is an ordinary person inside his house. According to Voltaire's well-known saying "No man is a hero to his valet." In Bosworth Smith's opinion this does not apply, at least, to the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him). Gibbon says that no Prophet has put his followers to a greater test than Muhammad (Peace be upon him) because he first presented

himself to those as a Prophet who knew him intimately well as an ordinary human being. He claimed to be a Prophet first to his wife, his personal servant, his cousin and his closest friend and none of them showed any hesitation at all in accepting the truth of his claim. No one knows the inherent weaknesses of a person better than his own wife. But is it not a fact that the first person to believe and declare her faith in the Prophet was his wife? She had shared fifteen years of married life with him before his Prophethood. She knew intimately all sides of his personality. When he claimed to be a prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him), she was the first to accept the veracity of that claim.

Even the most pious and the purest of persons cannot allow his wife to tell others about his private life. The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) had nine wives and every one of them had his permission to convey to others in public whatever they observed about him in private. They were all allowed to say in daylight what they had seen in him in the darkness of the night because he had complete confidence in the purity of his heart and the sincerity of his actions. He did nothing that had to be hidden from the public eye. Can any one match the purity of this conduct and such moral courage?

The books of traditions are all fulll of the details of the holy Prophet's perfect moral conduct and excellent human virtues. In particular, Qadi Ayyadh Andulasi's book Al-Shifa deals with this aspect of the holy Prophet's biography in an excellent manner. Once, during my visit to France, a European orientalist had remarked that in order to introduce the virtuous life of the holy Prophet to the West, it would be sufficient to translate Qadi Ayyadh's book into a European language.

In my own biography of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) I have arranged the personal details of his life under the following subtitles:

- his appearance;
- the Seal of Prophethood;
- his hair;
- his manner of walking,
- speaking and smiling;
- his clothes,
- his ring,
- helmet and armour;
- his food and manner of eating;
- his liking for decent clothes;
- his favorite colours;

- his dislike of certain colours;
- his use of perfume;
- his good taste;
- his love of riding.

Under his daily routine the subtitles include everything he usually did from morning to sunset:

- his manner of sleeping;
- his long hours of worship during the night;
- his manner of praying;
- his usual sermons;
- his routine during travelling and during a holy war;
- his visits to the sick and the suffering to offer his sympathy and condolences;
- his visiting with others and his general routine.

Under the title of his assembly with his companions these subtitles are included:

- his court;
- his public meetings for the purpose of preaching Allah's Message;
- the etiquette observed in those meetings;
- the usual time of those meetings;
- separate meetings for women;
- his way of preaching;
- the relaxed atmosphere of those meetings;
- the beneficial effect of his company;
- his manner of speech;
- the nature and wholesome influence of his talks.

The detailed account of his manner of worship is given under the sub-headings:

- his supplication and performance of prayers;
- fasting;
- alms-giving;
- his pilgrimage to Makkah (the Hajj);
- his remembrance of Allah at all times;
- his remembrance of Allah during fighting;
- his fear of Allah;
- his grief and weeping;
- his love of Allah;

- his faith in Allah;
- his fortitude and his thanks-giving

The holy Prohpet's morals and manners are described in complete detail, under these subtitles:

- a general description of his noble character;
- his steadfastness;
- his polite manners;
- his fair dealing;
- his love of justice;
- his kindness and generosity;
- his self-sacrifice;
- his dislike of beggary;
- his refusal to accept any charity for his personal use;
- his acceptance of gifts;
- his avoidance of asking others for help;
- his hatred of violence;
- his dislike of fault finding with others and self-praise;
- the simplicity and spontaneity of his manners;
- his avoidance of the display of riches and showing off;
- his modesty;
- his love of equality;
- his dislike of undue praise and flattery;
- his preference to do his work with his own hands;
- his fortitude;
- his courage;
- his truthfulness;
- keeping his promises;
- his self-denial and contentment;
- his treatment of the infidels and non-believers;
- his treatment of the Jews and Christians;
- his kindness to the poor;
- his forgiveness for his deadly enemies and his praying for them;
- his love of children;
- his treatment of women;
- his love of animals;
- his kindness and courtesy for everyone;
- the tenderness of his heart;
- his cheerful temperament;

- his affection and love for his own children and his wives.

Another standard biography, Zad-ul-Ma ‘ad, by Hafiz Ibn Qayyim, deals in great length, with the personal aspect of his personality. Here are some details:

- The holy Prophet’s correspondence;
- his manner of eating,
- his marriages and family life;
- his manner of going to bed and getting up;
- his manner of riding;
- his acceptance of personal servants;
- his business deals;
- taking care of his toilet;
- the manner of growing and trimming his moustache;
- his manner of speech;
- his silence,
- his smiles and tears;
- his manner of delivering a speech;
- his manner of performing Wudhu, Tayammum and Masah on his socks;
- his manner of performing prayers;
- his way of sitting between the two Sajdahs (prostration);
- his way of prostration;
- his manner of sitting just before ending the prayer and while in this position pointing with his index finger as he uttered his prayers;
- the way he ended his prayer;
- his supplication and other details of his prayers;
- his prayers at home and in the mosque,
- his prayers during travelling;
- his praying at night; his habit of taking a short nap before the dawn prayer;
- his way of reciting the holy Quran;
- his praying in the early part of the day;
- his way of prostrating to show his gratitude to Allah;
- his way of prostrating while reciting the holy Quran;
- his usual practice on Fridays;
- his worship on Fridays and his Friday sermon;
- his manner of prayers on the two Eid festivals;
- his prayers during eclipse;
- his manner of offering special prayers to bring the rain;
- his journeys;

- his prayers during travel;
- his manner of joining two obligatory prayers together when necessary;
- his manner of reciting and listening to the holy Quran;
- his way of consoling the sick;
- details of his attending of funerals and his manner of performing funeral prayers for an adult or a child;
- his way of offering his condolences and visiting the graves;
- his manner of praying at times of horror;
- his charity and alms-giving;
- his fasting;
- his extra effort and zeal in worship during the month of Ramadan;
- his manner of beginning his fasting with the sighting of the new moon;
- his acceptance of witnesses for the sighting of the new moon;
- his manner of fasting during his travels;
- his fasting on different occasions other than the holy month of Rarnadan;
- his dislike of fasting on Fridays alone;
- his manner of performing the Hajj and Umrah (Pilgrimage to Makkah);
- his slaughtering of animals as a sacrifice during the Hajj;
- his way of naming a new born baby,
- sacrificing sheep on that occasion,
- reciting of Azan in the baby's ears etc.;
- his extreme care in the choice of words while speaking;
- his manner of entering his house;
- his manner of entering a lavatory and getting out of it;
- his way of putting on his clothes;
- his prayers while performing his Wudhu (washing for prayers);
- his way of repeating the words of Azan while the Muezzin called the faithful to prayers;
- his prayers at the first sighting of the new moon;
- his prayers before and after having a meal;
- his manner of eating;
- his way of greeting others;
- his asking permission before entering a house;
- his manner of travelling and the prayers he said particularly during a journey;
- his particular prayers while conducting someone's marriage;
- his dislike of the use of certain words;
- his manner of conducting a holy war;
- his treatment of the prisoners of war;
- his treatment of the prisoners spies and slaves;

- how he dealt with the non-believers, hypocrites, Jews and Christians regarding peace, and no-war agreements;
- offering them protection under the Muslim rule and taking in return a nominal tax called Jizyah;
- his way of treating certain physical diseases.

I have presented before you only a partial list of the subheadings of certain details about the holy Prophet's life. You can judge for yourself and form some idea of how the more significant and basic features of the holy prophet's life must have been collected and recorded, and in what detail, considering these smaller details which have so meticulously been recorded and preserved. In short, all aspects of his life have been observed and re corded.

Gentlemen! I hope I have succeeded in making it clear to you what I meant by "Completeness" and "Comprehensiveness". I have reasonably justified my claim that no biography of any prophet can come up to this standard except that of the holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

I am aware of the shortage of time at my disposal while the subject demands a lot more. However, putting it briefly let me say that it was the holy Prohpet's instruction to everyone, and at all times, to make everything be known about him whether it concerned his private life or public life. There were instructions to note everything about him and let others know whether it concerned his presence in the mosque or the battle field, praying to Allah alone at night or leading an army in a battle, delivering a sermon or quietly meditating. His wives (May Allah be pleased with them) have told the world about his private life and his behaviour as a husband. In the holy Prohpet's mosque a place had been reserved for those of his followers who were homeless. For their livelihood they used to cut firewood during the day turn by turn so that they would spend the rest of their time in the company of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), learning the Divine Message from him. Their time was spent in observing the holy Prohpet's activities and listening to his teachings. There were about seventy of them including Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) who is credited with the greatest number of the holy Prophet's traditions. These seventy companions watched the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) day and night with the zeal and keenness of a detective and then passed on to others whatever they had learnt about him and from him. The whole population of Madinah had the opportunity to see his every movement at least five times a day for a continuous period of ten years. During his campaigns against the infidels, thousands of his worthy companions got the opportunity to see very closely and observe his noble practice. Upon his

victorious entry into Makkah he was accompanied by ten thousand of his faithful companions. On his journey to Tabuk there were thirty thousand of them and on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage there were a hundred thousand who got a chance to visit him or see him in all kinds of circumstances, in private and in public, teaching or praying in the mosque or leading his men in the battlefield. They watched every movement of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) and conveyed their knowledge of him to others because they had his permission to do so. In fact it was his standing order that whatever was learnt about him must be conveyed to others.

You can well imagine now if any aspect of the holy Prophet's life could have been left hidden from the world. His whole life was like an Open book and yet his worst enemies could not find any fault or weakness in his spotless character. Even today, many of his hostile biographers, particularly from the West, with all their research and scrutiny, have not been able to find any fault except their misconceived criticism of the questions of polygamy and the so-called holy war. Now, is it becoming on our part to consider this well known and well documented life pure and noble, or the lives of those the greater part of which is forever hidden from our eyes?

Look at the holy Prophet's life from another angle. He did not spend all his life amongst his followers and well wishers. In Makkah, he lived amongst the Qureish, his avowed enemies. He had dealt with them as a trader at a time when pitfalls of dishonesty, unfair deals, going back on one's word were a common practice in that society. Before he was ordained the Prophet of Allah he had spent forty years of his life with them, and because of his integrity, honesty and fairness in every deal that he made as a businessman had earned him the title of Al-Amin (the trustworthy) from them. Even when they bitterly opposed him as the Prophet of Allah (because he called them to the worship of One God), they continued keeping their valuables in his trust. That is why at the time of his emigration to Madinah, he had left his cousin Ali behind (May Allah be pleased with him) in Makkah so that he could return people their valuables. When he declared his Prophethood to the Qureish, they became his bitter enemies and in their rage cut off all relations with him. They persecuted him, threw refuse and stones on him, plotted to kill him, called him names, called him a sorcerer, a poet and a lunatic but none of them could ever lay a finger on his spotless character and pure morals. To lay claim to prophethood means to lay claim to total purity of character and infallibility in conveying the Divine message. In order to discredit him, all that the Qureish needed to do was to find a few faults in his character and collect some evidence to prove their point. But history has shown us that in

their opposition to his mission and to falsify his claim to Prophethood the Qureish spent their wealth lavishly, lost their sons in wars against him and sacrificed their own lives too, but they could never find any blemish in his immaculate character: Does it not prove that he was as pious and noble even in the sight of his enemies as he was to his friends?

Once, all the elders and prominent leaders of the Qureish were sitting together and talking about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Nasr bin Harith, the most experienced of them addressed the gathering and said, "O Qureish! You have failed to find an answer to the challenge posed by Muhammad. You have watched him grow up from a child into a young man. He used to be the most favoured among you. He was the most truthful and trustworthy in your sight. Now that his hair has started turning grey and he has put forth the Divine message, you claim that he is a wizard, a fortune teller, a poet and a lunatic. By God I have heard him and none of these things can be found in him." (Quoted from Ibn Hisham)

His biggest enemy, Abu Jahal, used to say "Muhammad! I don't call you a liar but I don't consider the message you preach to be true." Imam Tirmizi quotes the following verse of the holy Quran saying that it was revealed on this occasion: -

"Indeed We know that what they say makes you sad, because it is not you whom they reject, but the transgressors actually deny the signs of Allah."

(Chap, 6: Vrs, 33)

When the Prophet (Peace be upon him) was ordered by Allah to begin his mission by warning his own people first, he cried out from the top of a hill. "O People of Qureish!" In response to his call they all gathered around him. He said to them, "If I tell you that a host of enemies is about to attack you from behind this mountain, would you believe me?" They replied in unison "Yes, because we have never heard you tell a lie." (Al-Bukhari)

Look at the Roman Emperor's court where the holy Prophet's emissary has just arrived. Abu Sufyan (who has been the Prophet's worst enemy and has led many military campaigns against him in the past six years) has been called by the emperor who wants to enquire about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Imagine how critical the moment is from the Muslims' point of view. Here is an avowed enemy who wants to destroy the holy Prophet and his mission by whatever means available to him. By his evidence in the powerful emperor's court he can win his favour. If he manages to convince the emperor, he can have the

powerful Roman legions on his side marching towards Madinah to destroy the Muslims. How ever, listen to the dialogue between the emperor and Abu Sufyan

The emperor: This man who claims to be a Prophet—what is his family like?

Abu Sufyan: He comes from a noble family

The emperor: Has anyone of his ancestors ever claimed to be a Prophet?

Abu Sufyan: No!

The emperor: Has there ever been a king in his family?

Abu Sufyan: No!

The emperor: What about his followers? Are they well off and influential or humble people?

Abu Sufyan: They are weak and humble

The emperor: Are they increasing in number or decreasing?

Abu Sufyan: They are on the increase.

The emperor: Has he ever lied to you people?

Abu Sufyan: Never.

The emperor: Has he ever broken his promise or betrayed his trust?

Abu Sufyan: Not so far. But we will watch him for future,

The emperor: What are his teachings?

Abu Sufyan: He says, worship One God, establish prayers, be pious, be truthful and fulfil your family obligations.

I would like to draw your attention to a point here. The holy Prophet's early followers who first declared their faith in him were not simple fishermen, nor the ever oppressed masses of an Egyptian Pharaoh. Rather they belonged to a nation that had for ever remained free and independent. They were a fiercely

independent and proud people, well-known for their wisdom and prudence. They had never bowed to a foreign power at any time in history. They were experienced travellers whose trade had spread well beyond their borders: up to Iran, Syria, Egypt and Asia minor. They had amongst them persons whose wit and humour, common sense and judgement has since been preserved in the books of history. After embracing Islam, they have produced military leaders who successfully defended their homeland against the might of foreign armies. They have also produced able and just rulers who showed great ability in administration and government. Can anyone imagine for a moment that such a people could, have been fooled by Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) that they should have failed to see any falsehood in him? On the contrary, they were the very people who noted each and every action of the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him) and felt proud in obeying all his teachings. There cannot be a better proof of the truth and perfection of the personality and character of the holy prophet (Peace be upon him), after we have looked at the history of his first followers.

On his part, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) never tried to hide anything about himself. The way he was, was known to everyone and is still known to everyone. His wife, Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) remained with him for nine years. She says "If anyone ever said to you that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), hid some of Allah's commandments and did not convey all of the Divine Revelation, never believe such a person because Allah Himself says in the Divine Revelation, the holy Quran:

"O Messenger, convey all that has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not, then you shall not have conveyed His message (at all)……"

(Chap, 5: Vrs, 67)

No one in the world likes to flaunt even the smallest of his mistakes, particularly when he happens to be the moral and spiritual leader of a nation. But there are several verses in the holy Quran wherein the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) has been admonished by Allah for his apparent errors of judgment. However, he conveyed each one of such verses to the people who memorized them (like the rest of the holy Quran). These verses were recited in every mosque, and even today wherever there are followers of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) they are being recited. The world would never have known about these negligible mistakes of judgment, had they not been mentioned in the holy Quran. But a noble life was to be presented as a whole and so it was done.

To the Arabs, it was objectionable to many the divorced or the widowed wife of one's adopted son. The holy Quran does not consider such a marriage unlawful. It mentions clearly the event of the Prophet's marriage to Zainab, the divorced wife of Zaid who was not his real son. According to Ayesha (May Allah be pleased with her) if the Prophet could, he would have certainly omitted this verse (regarding his marriage), in order to avoid the criticism of his adversaries. Yet, he did not do so. This proves that no aspect of his life has remained in darkness.

Bosworth Smith's comments are worth mentioning here. He says, "There is full light of day upon all that light can ever reach at all. The abysmal depths of personality indeed are, and must always remain beyond the reach of any line and plummet of ours. But we know everything of the external history of Muhammad—his youth, his appearance, his relations, his habits: the first idea and the gradual growth, intermittent though it was, of his great revelation; while for his internal history, after his mission had, been proclaimed, we have a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation, and in the chaos of its contents, but on the substantial authenticity of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt. There, if in any book, we have a mirror of one of the master-spirits of the world; often inartistic, incoherent, self-contradictory, dull, but impregnated with a few grand ideas which stand out from the whole; a mind seething with the inspiration pent within it, intoxicated with God, but full of human weaknesses, from which he never pretended—and it is his lasting glory that he never pretended—to be free."

He continues: "It has been remarked by Gibbon that no incipient Prophet ever passed through so severe an ordeal as Muhammad (Peace be upon him), since he first presented himself as a Prophet to those who were most conversant with his infirmities as a man. Those who knew him best, - his wife, his slave, his cousin, his earliest friend—he, who, as Muhammad said, alone of his converts turned not back neither was perplexed—were the first to recognize his mission. The ordinary lot of a Prophet was in his case reversed; he was not without honor save among those who did not know him well."

The above evidence makes it quite clear that the better one knew the Prophet the stronger their faith grew in him. This has not been generally the case with other Prophets. They were first recognized by those who did not know them and later came the ones who were close to them. Here, Prophet Muhammad's case is entirely different. His first believers were those who knew his life, his character and morals more than anyone else, and each one of them had to go through the severest test imaginable of their faith. His wife Khadija (May Allah be pleased with

her) shared his ordeal with him when his tribe ostracized him and they were confined in the wilderness of She'ab Abi Talib near Makkah for three years, often going without food or water. His friend, Abu Bakr Siddique (May Allah be pleased with him), was his only companion on his journey to Madinah while his enemies were looking for him every where, thirsty for his blood. His cousin, Ali (May Allah be pleased with him,) took his place in the bed that night while the house was surrounded by the Qureish who had come to murder the Prophet. His slave Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him) refused to go with his own father even when the Prophet had set him free. Zaid had been abducted and sold in Makkah and his father had found him there after a long and painful search. He gladly allowed his son to remain in Makkah with the Prophet, saying he was in much better hands.

Godfrey Higgins says in Apology for the Life of Muhammad, "The Christians would do well to recollect that the doctrines of Muhammad created a degree of enthusiasm in his followers which is to be sought in vain in the immediate followers of Jesus….when Jesus was led to the Cross, his followers fled, their enthusiasm forsook them, they left him to perish….The followers of Muhammad, on the contrary, rallied round their persecuted Prophet, and risking their lives in his defense, made him triumph over all his enemies."

In the famous Battle of Uhad, when the warriors of Qureish managed to confuse the Muslim lines, and tried to surround the holy Prophet by attacking him from all sides, he called out "Who wants to sacrifice his life in my defence?" Hearing this call, seven Ansari youth appeared from no where and fighting bravely died one by one defending their beloved Prophet (Peace be upon him). An Ansari woman lost her father, her brother and her husband. Each time, when she was informed of the death of one of her loved ones, she asked "but how is our beloved Prophet, the Messenger of Allah?" She was told that he was quite safe. She came to the place where the Prophet had been and found him alive and well, she cried out, "No loss can be greater than your loss. No calamity is a calamity if you are alive. The loss of my father, brother and husband is but a humble sacrifice for your sake."

My friends! These supreme examples of selfless love, dedication and sacrifice are of those people who knew the Prophet well. Had he not been the perfect example in their sight, they would not have sacrificed their lives for him. The Islamic faith requires its followers to hold their Prophet as a perfect model and a guide, following whose example they can attain the love of God. A verse of the holy Quran states:

"Say (O Prophet): ¯If you really love Allah, then follow me, and Allah shall love you….."

(Chap, 3: Vrs, 31)

So, the criterion for God's love is how much one follows the ideal life of His Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

It is not too difficult to give up one's life in a moment of religious frenzy. The worthy companions of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) made a more difficult choice. They chose a way of life that would please Allah. They chose a lifetime of following the practice of His Prophet in everything they did. This was, by no means, an easy test but they passed it with flying colours. They followed in his steps all the way. It was this spirit which made the holy Prophet's companions, their disciples and then those who came after them, the scholars of the Prophet's traditions, the Muslim historians and biographers to look for each and every of his sayings, his actions and movements and record them for the coming generations so that every Muslim could follow him to the best of his capacity. This fact makes it quite clear that in their minds the life of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) was a perfect and ideal life that was meant to be followed in all its details. The standard of perfection, in their sight, was the degree to which one followed the holy Prophet's example.

In Islam, the holy Prophet's life is the supreme model for a Muslim. Therefore, all its aspects should be clearly known to everybody, and so they are. No link is missing. No event of his life is shrouded in mystery. Every thing is as clear as a mirror, preserved for ever in the books of history. That is the evidence that helps one to believe in an ideal, innocent and perfect life which is as clear as daylight. Only such a life can serve as a model for all mankind.

This world has produced great civilizations such as those of Babylon, Assyria, India, China, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Great ethical systems were evolved. Rules for a civilized and polite behaviour were set. Etiquettes and conventions were established for all kinds of human activities such as sitting, standing, eating and drinking, clothing, visiting people, sleeping, marriages, funerals, meeting, inviting, saluting, greeting, bathing and cleansing, offering congratulations, offering condolences and conducting burials etc. It took centuries to establish the principles of these ancient civilizations, yet they could not stand the challenge of time. Centuries old conventions crumbled in no time. All those great civilizations are now found only in history books. Whereas the Islamic civilization evolved and established in just a few years. And after a passage of over 1400 years it is there,

constant and unchanged, present in hundreds of nations spread all over the world. The basic reason is that it originates from one source—the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This faultless and noble way of life was reflected in the lives of his worthy companions and then in those of their dedicated disciples and thus it became the established way of life of the world of Islam. The holy Prophet's life was the centre around which revolved the lives of his companions. The later generations have expanded the circle. Although the present day Muslims are at quite a distance from the centre of that circle, they are tracing the same path. The holy Prophet's way of life became the way of life of his immediate followers and then that of the entire Muslim world through the ages. Today that picture is with us in its entirety, intact and complete. In today's Africa or India if a tribe is converted to Christianity, it gets its religion from the Bible but is taught the ways and culture of Europe. But when a wild tribe of remote Africa converts to Islam, it gets its faith and a complete way of life from the same single source. When a person enters Islam, the complete picture of the life of the Prophet of Islam comes before him, guiding him through various human conditions and needs. This living picture becomes a reflection of the whole life of a Muslim.

Once, a Jew sarcastically remarked to a companion of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him): "Your Prophet teaches you everything, even the most mundane deeds of daily life." He said: "Yes! And he has even taught us how to cleanse our private parts" The Muslims can proudly present his total guidance to the modem and complex world of today. Prophet Muhammad's life is a mirror which shows human life in its entirety. Anyone can look at it and find guidance for all his deeds and actions—actions of body and mind, of his inner self and his outward appearance, of his tongue and his heart. It will show him a comprehensive and complete way of life. That is why no Muslim (society or individual) has ever needed to look outside their religion and their Prophet's life for their moral, ethical and social conduct. By comparing it with other social norms and ethical and moral systems they can easily differentiate between Good and Evil, between the Beautiful and the Ugly. And since no human life is available in such a complete and comprehensive form, the Prophet of Islam is the only ideal and perfect model following whose example the whole mankind can live a pure, decent and complete life.

May Allah shower His best Blessings on him.

Lecture 5. The Comprehensiveness of the Holy Prophet's Life

Gentlemen! Every religion has shown to human beings how they could become worthy of achieving God's love, and that usually meant following the good advice of the founder or the prophet of that particular religion. But Islam has done still better. It presents the practical example of its Prophet to everyone. The means to receiving God's love is through following His Prophet example in every undertaking of life. Therefore, Islam is based on two things: the word of God and its application as shown in the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The word of God, or the Kitab means the Commandment of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and Sunnah, the Arabic term stands for the holy Prophet's practice. Literally, it means the 'way", therefore, Sunnah is the way how the Prophet lived following Allah's Commands. It is the practical example of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) that has been completely and fully preserved in the books of the Prophet's traditions. In short, a Muslim's success and spiritual flulfilment lies in following the holy Prophet's Sunnah.

People who follow a particular religion are never of the same type. Variety is the essence of life. Life goes on through cooperation between people of different dispositions, jobs and professions. The spectrum of life needs to have kings and presidents; the rulers and their obedient subjects; judges and courts to maintain law and order; army commanders to defend peace; the poor and the rich; pious men of God who spend whole nights in prayer or those who strive in His path spreading His message during the day; family and friends; merchants and businessmen and spiritual leaders. In short, this world exists and goes on with the existence of all these different kinds of people. And all of them need a code, a discipline, a way of life to make them successful in their own field of activity and contribute to the total richness of human life. Islam calls upon all human beings to follow the Sunnah—the way of Allah's Prophet (Peace be upon him). It clearly means that it can offer practical examples to all kinds of people from the life of its Prophet (Peace be upon him). This very idea proves the comprehensiveness of the Prophet's life which contains practical lessons and guidance for people in every walk of life. A ruler's life cannot become a complete model for the ruled. Similarly, a poor person's life is not a complete and practical example which a wealthy person could follow. What is needed here is the universal example of the comprehensive life of the Prophet of Islam which, like a bouquet of flowers, contains all the different colours and shades of human life.

In addition to the variety of different classes of human beings, there is immense diversity in the actions of an individual human being in different situations. We walk about and sit down; we laugh and we cry; we put on and take off clothes; we give and we take; we learn and we teach; we kill and get killed; we save lives and we take lives; we eat and we feed; we do favours and we get favours; we sacrifice life and we rescue life; we worship and we do business; we become hosts and we become guests etc. For all these actions, mundane or sublime, we need to have practical examples which could show us the best way of doing a thing in ever changing situations and varying conditions of life.

Apart from these physical activities, there are the actions of heart and mind which belong to the world of emotions and feelings. With changing moments, we experience different feelings and emotions. Sometimes we are pleased and some times angry; some times happy and sometimes gloomy; we sometimes suffer hardship and sometimes indulge in luxury; sometimes we taste success and sometimes failure. In different situations we act under the influence of a variety of emotions. Our good moral conduct depends on the control and balance of these emotions. We need the sublime example of the selfless Prophet of Madinah which could inspire us to exercise control over the intensity of our basic desires and lead us safely through the ways he himself traversed under the Divine guidance.

In order to deal with many different situations of our life, we need to have certain qualities of mind and heart like courage, fortitude, will power, patience, gratefulness, faith, resilience, self-sacrifice, contentment modesty, humility etc. But only a practical example can inspire in us these noble emotions. Where else can we find them all in one place except in the person of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)? If we look at the available information about Moses, all we get is the strength and bravety of a courageous leader but no examples of a kind and soft heart showing mercy to others. Christ’s life is full of love and mercy and kindness, but nothing to inspire the powerful emotions. In human life, we need a balanced blend of love and power. In Prophet Muhammad’s biography we can find an excellent balance of mercy and strength, showing numerous examples of both.

Only Prophet Muhammad’s personality displays miraculously balanced emotions found in a human being in a wide variety of situations. If you are wealthy, follow the example of the noble trader of Makkah and trustworthy custodian of the treasures of Bahrain. If you are poor, look at his example when he was confined to a place called Shi’b Abi Taleb outside Makkah for three years where even the bare necessities of life were denied to him and his children, or when he was

forced to leave his hometown and emigrate to Madinah. If you are a king, learn about him when he became the absolute ruler of Arabia. If you are the ruled, look how he endured the oppression of Qureish in Makkah. If you are a victor, look at the commander of the battles of Badr and Hunayn. If you are a loser learn your lessons from the battle of Uhad. If you are a teacher, look at the noble teacher of Suffah (in his mosque in Madinah). If you are a student, look at the student receiving Allah's Message from Gabriel. If you are a preacher, listen to the preacher of Madinah delivering his sermons in his mosque. If you have to raise the voice of truth against the evil powers of oppression, look at the lonely and helpless messenger of Allah conveying His message in Makkah. If you have, with Allah's help, overcome your opponents and your enemies, watch the conqueror of Makkah in triumph. If you want to organize your business or worldly affairs, look at the administration of the owner of the lands of Bani Nudhair, Khyber and Fadak. If you are an orphan, look at the upbringing of the orphan child of Amenah and Abdullah. If you are a boy, watch him grow under the loving gaze of Halimah Sa'diyah (May Allah be pleased with her). If you are an adolescent, study the character of the shephard of Makkah. If you are a travelling tradesman, look at the examples set by the caravan leader of Basrah. If you are an arbitrator or a judge in a court of law, imagine him entering the holy Mosque of Makkah at dawn and settling the dispute among the blood-thirsty rival tribesman of Makkah, and preventing bloodshed in the holy House of God with his wise judgment. And watch the judge sitting in the courtyard of his mud-brick Mosque of Madinah, handing out impartial judgment in the cases of the high or the low, the rich or the poor with equal fairness.

If you are a husband, study the pure and faithful life of the noble husband of Khadijah and Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with them) If you have children, look at Fatimah's father's upbringing of her and her son Hassan and Hussain (May Allah be pleased with them). Whoever you are and whatever your circumstance, if you are looking for guidance, correctness of conduct and the bliss of life, you will always find it in the shining example of Allah's last Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Whoever wants to shun the darkness of ignorance and prejudice and is looking for the light of truth and guidance, they will find it in the immaculate and perfect life of the holy Prophet, whose divinely guided and inspired life is the only source of salvation for mankind. One who has some understanding of The holy Prophet's biography will feel that the lives of the other great prophets of Allah like Noah, Abraham, Job, Jonah, Moses and Christ (Peace be upon them all) are combined into one, represented in the holy Prophet's life. The sublime examples of the nobility of the human character and

morals that distinguish each messenger of Allah individually are found in the holy Prophet's life collectively, for all those who seek truth and guidance from his life.

About forty years back, Hassan Ali, a well known teacher and preachar of Islam used to bring out a magazine from Patnah (India) called the "Light of Islam". He has quoted some remarks in his magazine, from one of his non-Muslim friends. This friend, a well-educated Hindu, once said to him, "I consider your Prophet the greatest and most perfect personality ever to have lived in this world." Hassan Ali asked him, How do you compare our Prophet (Peace be upon him) with Jesus (Peace be upon him). He said, compared to Muhammad, Jesus seems to me like an innocent little child talking sweetly in front of a great sage." Then he asked him, 'why do you consider the Prophet of Islam the most perfect man in human history' He said that he saw in his life such conflicting and diverse qualities present at the same time as have never been combined into one single personality. He was a king who had absolute power over a vast country like Arabia and yet displayed such humbleness as if he had no power even on his own self and was totally dependent upon Allah. He was so wealthy that camel-loads of treasures were coming into his capital as a tribute and yet in his own house no fire was lit for months together, and he went without food for days. He was a militaiy commander of such calibre that he would enter into a battle with a handful of men against thousands of well equipped, armoured enemy and come out victorious. And yet he was so peace loving that when he had under his command thousands of warriors, who would gladly give up their lives for him, he signed a peace treaty without hesitation. He was so courageous that he would face thousands of enemies all alone and yet so kind-hearted that he did not shed the blood of a single human being with his own hand. So mindful of human ties that he would care for the well- being of his family, his countrymen, the poor and the needy, and would worry himself to death for the salvation of the whole human race. But when he stood in prayer before Allah, it seemed that he had known no one but Him. He never took revenge for himself, even from those who called him names and persecuted him. He forgave his worst personal enemies and wished them well. But he never forgave those who were Allah's enemy and stood in the way of spreading the Truth. He always warned them of the torture of Hell and God's wrath. Just when we think he is a fighting swordsman, he appears to be a hermit who stands in prayer all night long. We look at him in awe as a great conqueror but at the same time he appears before us as the innocent Messenger of Allah. We want to call him the emperor of Arabia, but find him sifting on a humble mat made from the date-palm leaves. There comes a time when the courtyard of his mosque in Madinah is piled up with spoils of war from all over Arabia, yet in his own home his children are starving. And when the

prisoners of war are being distributed over other Muslim households, his own daughter Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with her) returns home empty handed though her hands are blistered and her body is scarred as a result of vigorous household chores. Half of Arabia has submitted to him, but when his companion Umar visits him, he finds him lying on a coarse mat which has left its marks on his bare shoulders. In a corner he finds a handful of barley and an empty jar hanging from a hook. Umar's eyes are filled with tears at this austerity and self-denial. When he's asked why he is crying, he says, "O Messenger of Allah! Can there be a greater reason for my crying? The emperors of the Persian and the Roman Empire are living in luxuries while you, the Prophet of Allah, live in such poverty" The Prophet says, "Umar! Aren't you pleased to know that their lot is this temporary world and we are to get the eternal bliss in the Hereafter?'

Abu Sufyan, before his conversion to Islam was the biggest opponent of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). On the day of the holy Prophet's triumphant entry into Makkah, he was watching along with the Prophet's uncle, Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him), the Muslim army march past them. When he looked at the wave after wave of the Muslim soldiers, the Arab warriors carrying their colourful tribal banners, he still could not perceive the deeper truth and remarked to the Prophet's uncle, 'Abbas!, your nephew has become a great king!" Abbas, whose eyes were looking beyond the apparent show, answered, "Abu Sufyan! This is not the show of power of a worldly king. It is the glory of Allah's Prophet."

Adi bin Hatim was the son of the legendary Arab, Hatim Al-Tai (kmown for his fabulous hospitality). He was a Christian when he came to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He saw the preparations being made for a military campaign and observed his companions' overwhelming devotion to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He found it difficult to determine weather Muhammad was a king or the messenger of Allah. In the meantime, a poor slave girl of Madinah entered and said that she had a request to make. The holy Prophet at once stood up and said, 'I am ready to listen to your problem at any place and any time in Madinah.' And he immediately arranged to solve her problem. Adi, who had known the pomp and glory of the kings, did not take long to realize that no king could show such humility, modesty and kindliness towards a meagre slave girl. Certainly this was the glory of the Prophet of God. He made the decision in his heart. Immediately he removed the cross he was wearing and announced his devotion to the Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him).

Whatever I have said so for is not a poetic praise of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). These are solid statements of his noble character taken from authentic

history. Only such a complete and comprehensive life which can I produce numerous practical examples for the guidance and well-being of all kinds and classes of people in their varied situations and complexities of life deserves to lead the whole world in all times and in all places. He alone can produce shining examples from his own life to lead us through such diverse situations of life as love and sympathy yet wrath and anger; generosity and poverty and starvation; courage and bravery and mercy and kindliness; mundane household affairs and sublime relation with Allah; this temporary life and the eternity of the Hereafter. He not only gives the good tidings of success in this world but also gives a code of life which leads to the eternal bliss of the next world. It is generally believed that mercy and forgiveness, meekness and kindliness are the main traits of humanity, or perhaps the only virtues of perfect humanity. Therefore, whoever possesses these virtues must be the greatest teacher and well-wisher of humanity. But, are these the only powers created in a human personality? A human being shows other equally powerful emotions too, such as anger, generosity, love, hatred, greed, contentment, revenge and forgiveness which cannot be separated from human nature. Therefore, a perfect teacher and guide for all humanity can be one who can strike a balance between these diverse and sometimes conilicting human traits and give them a proper direction. The religions that claim that the biographies of their prophets are based only on mercy and love and forgiveness cannot show that they were able to follow their example collectively in their daily lives for long. Since the first great Christian king Constantine to the present day, the Christian world has produced many powerful and great rulers. But, did anyone of them ever base the law of his kingdom on the code of life of their prophet? If his own followers could not find guidance for all practical purposes in the life of their prophet, how can they claim that it can be a perfect and complete model for the whole world to follow?

The salient feature of Noah's life is the outrage against the evil of a faithless society. Abraham's life shows a fight against paganism. The life of Moses is a constant struggle against the powers of oppression and tyranny and then the establishment of administration and collective rules and regulations for a just social order. Christ's life is a lesson in meekness, humility, mercy, forgiveness and contentment. Solomon's life shows us the splendour of royal prerogatives. Job's life is a model of patient acceptance of suffering. Jonah's life gives the supreme example of repentance and seeking Allah's mercy and forgiveness. In Joseph's life there is a lesson in preaching the truth even as a prisoner within the boundaries of a prison. David's life is a story of celebrating Allah's Glory and crying to him in humble prayers. Jacob's life is an example of total surrender to Allah's Will, and faith and hope in His Mercy. But if you look at Prophet Muhammad's noble life

history, you will find that it is a paragon of the virtues found individu ally in the lives of Allah's Prophet Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Solomon, David, Job, Jonah, Joseph and Jacob (Peace be upon them all).

A scholar of the holy Prophet's traditions, Khateeb Baghdadi, relates (though his report is not considered totally authentic by some scholars) that at the time of the holy Prophet's birth, a voice from the realm of the un known was heard calling, Take Muhammad to all the worlds, and into the depths of the oceans, and to the realms of the jinns and humans, birds and animals, to all living beings, so that the whole universe may know his name. Give him Adam's morality, Seth's God-consciousness, Noah's cour age, Abraham's loyalty, Ismail's speech, Isaac's acceptance, Saleh 's eloquence, Lot's wisdom, the strong will of Moses, Job's patience, Jonah's obedience, Joshua's struggle, David's voice, Daniel's love, the dignity of Elias, John's piety, Christ's self-denial, and bathe him in the ethics of all the Prophets of Allah." The scholars, who have considered this report authentic and have mentioned it in their collection of traditions, actually mean to emphasize the comprehensive and universal nature of the holy Prophet's character. What was given to all the Prophets individually, was blended into Prophet Muhammad's person collectively.

If you look at the different aspects of the holy Prophet's life, this quality of comprehensiveness will stand out quite clearly. Watch Prophet Muhammad's migration from Makkah to Madinah, Does it not remind you of the flight of Moses from Egypt to Madayin? There is a remarkable similarity between Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) meditating on Mount Hira and receiving the first revelation from Allah and Moses observing Allah's Glory on Mount Sinai. The only difference is that Prophet Muhammad's meditation was directed inwards, and Moses was looking with open eyes. Imagine Christ's preaching from Mount of Olives and Prophet Muhammad's call to the Qureish of Makkah from Mount Safa. How similar is the Prophet leading his forces against the Arab non-believ ers to Moses fighting against the infidels of Palestine! When the holy Prophet prayed to Allah for the destruction of seven evil mongers of the tribal leaders of Makkah, he was like Moses who prayed to Allah to destroy the Pharoah and his followers who had rejected the Truth even though they had seen the clear signs of his prophethood from Allah. When the holy Prophet prayed to Allah to forgive his blood-thirsty enemies in the battle of Uhad, he was at that time like Christ showing mercy and kindness. If you look at Prophet Muhammad handing out judgment in the court of his holy Mosque in Madinah, or in his fight against non-believers, it would seem as if you were looking at Moses. But if you look at him in his humble residence or in a cave or in the loneliness of dark nights, deep in

meditation and prayer to his Lord, you might see the very picture of Christ. If you listen to the supplications constantly on his tongue celebrating the Glory of Allah, you will be reminded of David singing the praise of Allah. If you look at him leading a victorious army into Makkah, you may imagine the power and glory of Solomon. Imagine his three years confinement outside Makkah, where it was hard to get any food, you can see the picture of Prophet Joseph in the Egyptian prison.

Moses was given the Divine Law, David celebrated Allah's praise, Christ's predominent virtue was piety and morality, But Prophet Muhammad was given the Law, the Prayer the Supplication and the Moral Code. The sum of these is found in the holy Quran in the form of words, and in practice it is reflected in the whole personality of the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him).

Friends! Let me demonstrate another side of the comprehensive nature of the holy Prophet's life history. There are usually two kinds of educational institutions in the world. Some are meant for specialized professional training such as a medical college, an engineering college, an arts school, a commerce college, an agricultural institute, etc. All of them produce doctors, engineers, artists, experts in business and agriculture respectively. Similarly, a military college will train only soldiers. And then there are bigger institutions, or universities, which usually include all these various schools and colleges. These universities have a much wider scope of knowledge where students come from different places and choose their particular field of study according to their inclinations and needs. Thus generals and soldiers, judges and lawyers, business executives and doctors and professionals of all sorts are produced. But the human society cannot be formed by just one kind of education or one kind of professionals. It comes into being and exists with the sum of all these different branches of knowledge. If this world were to have one kind of knowledge or one kind of vocation, the complex machine of this civilization would immediately come to a standstill. Likewise, if this world is filled with ascetics and recluses, it will not achieve perfection. Now, let us look at the available biographies of different Prophets of Allah from this angle. According to a saying of Christ (Peace be upon him), a tree is known by its fruit. Similarly, an educational institution is judged by the achievements of its students. If you look at those schools of human society where the teachers are the Prophets of Allah, you will find the number of disciples credited to each Prophet from ten, fifteen, fifty, seventy, a hundred to a maximum of twenty thousand. But the Last Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him) had over a hundred thousand disciples at one and the same time. If you want to learn about the pupils of the earlier Prophets and ask where they were from; who they were; how

they were trained; what their habits and morals were like; what their spiritual and other achievements were in life; what effect their education and training left on their societies, you cannot find any answer to these questions. But the disciples of Prophet Muhammad have a well documented history. You can find out the name, personal details, education and spiritual training and its influence on others etc. of any of the holy Prophet’s pupils, securely recorded in the history of Islam.

Look a step further. Nearly every religion claims that its doors are open to all human beings. But the history of its founder, its first teacher will tell you that in his lifetime only one nation, one country, one race or one tribe entered that particular religion. Did they have a universal appeal or a common call for every human being? All the Prophets of Torah never addressed their call beyond Iraq or Palestine or Egypt. They remained confmed in their own homeland and concentrated on their own nation or their own race. Most of them focused on the Children of Israel. The early Arab Prophets too were responsible only for their own nations. Even the Disciples of Christ did not include any non-Israelite. He was only looking fbr the ‘Lost Sheep of the House of Israel’. It is also mentioned in the Bible that teaching non-Israelites was like throwing his children’s food to the dogs. The preachers of Hinduism never thought of taking it out of the sacred boundaries of the land of Aryan India. Granted that some Budhist king carried his message beyond India but, like the Christians, it was the idea of his followers. The history of the founder is silent on this point.

Let us consider some of the outstanding pupils of the great Arab Prophet’s School. Here are Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman, Ali, Talha and Zubair (May Allah be pleased with them all). They belong to the Qureish of Makkah. Then there are Abu Zhar and Anas, from the Ghaffari Tribe of Tihama, from outside Makkah. Abu Hurairah and Tufail bin Amr are from the Dossy tribe and have come from Yemen. Abu Mousa Ashary and Mu’azh bin Jabal are also from Yemen but from other tribes. Dhimmad bin Tha’albah is from the tribe of Azd, Khabbab bin Al-Arrt from Tamim, Munqizh bin Habban and Munzhir bin Ayezh have come from Bahrain from the tribe of Abd Al-Qais. Obaid and Jaffer are Omani chiefs. Here is Bilal, a Negro from Ethiopia and Suhaib, the Roman, and Salman, the Persian. Firoz Dailmi is from Yemen, and Seekhab and Markabud come from Iran.

The Treaty of Hudaibiyah in 6 AH calls for peace, which is the very meaning of Islam and its most cherished goal. It stops fighting between the Qureish and the Muslims and gives the Muslims a free hand to preach their religion whenever they want. What did the holy Prophet do after this great achievement? The same year, he sent letters to kings and leaders of many nations of the world calling

them to the worship of One God and following the way of Islam. Dehya Kalbi carried this letter to the Roman emperor, Abdullah Ibn Huzafah Sehmi to the Persian king and Hatib bin Balta to the Egyptian ruler. Amr bin Umayyah was sent to the king of Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia), Shua'a bin Wahab Al-Asadi to the Syrian chief Harith Ghassani and Sulait bin Amr to different tribal chiefs in Yamama. This shows that the admission to holy Prophet's school was open to all.

The sending of the holy Prophet's emissaries in his own lifetime, carrying Allah's Message to various nations living in different parts of the world makes it quite clear that His message was universal. It was not meant for the Arabs alone. It was meant for all mankind. Regardless of their colour, country, race, nation, tribe or language it called all individuals, families, tribes and nations to the worship of Allah, the one and only God, their Lord and the Lord of the worlds. And this call remains the same today and for ever, for all the people all over the world.

Let us look at the nature of the holy Prophet's centre of learning at Madina. Was it like a school where only one kind of knowledge was imparted? Or was it like an all-round magnificent university where people from different countries and different nations came and received knowledge and education according to their needs and capacity? Compare this with what is known from the life history of Moses (Peace be upon him). All we have there is a few military officers and men, some judges and religious authorities. Look for what is known of Christ's disciples. You will find no more than a few ascetics, roaming in the streets of Palestine. But amongst those taught and trained by Prophet Muhammad, you will fmd such men of diverse accomplishments as the King of Abyssinia, Asmaha; the Chief of Ma'an, Farwah; the Chief of Himyr, Zulkala'a the Chief of Hamadan, Amer bin Shahr; the Yemeni Chief Firoz Dailmi and Markabud; and Omani Chief, Obaid and Ja His students include men of the calibre of Bilal, Yasir Suhaib, Khabbab, Ammar and Abu Fukayha. There were also slave girls like Sumayyah, Lubaina, Zinnira, Nahdiyah and Umm-Obais. These men and women were the very symbol of the struggle for freedom against the powers of oppression. Among the holy Prophet's disciples, you will find kings, chieftains, the poor and the rich, the slaves and the masters, standing shoulder to shoulder in one row.

Prophet Muhammad's education has produced great men of wisdom, scholars, leaders of men and rulers administering vast territories. In the forefront are Abu-Bakr Siddique, Umar Al-Farooq, Othman Ghani, Ali Al Murtadha and Mua'wia bin Abu-Sufyan (May Allah be pleased with them all). Their benign and just rule extended from east to west, from Africa to the borders of India, setting up examples of civil administration and establishing new social, political and legal

orders. Their decisions based on fairness and wisdom made the Roman and Persian systems look ineffective and worthless, and buried them in the pages of history forever. They have left such shining examples of fair, efficient and just rule that the whole history of mankind cannot match the standard set up by them.

IThen you have such courageous and resolute military leaders like Khalid bin Waleed, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, Abu Obaidah bin Jarrah and Amr bin Al-Aas (May Allah be pleased with them all) who shattered the most powerful oppressive regimes of their era in a matter of years and proved to be the most powerfiui conquerers of their time who are still held by the world in awe. Sa'ad conquered the mighty Persian empire, Khalid and Abu Obaidah turned the Romans out of Palestine and restored the land of Abraham (Peace be upon him) to its rightfiul owners. Amr bin Al-A'as conquered the land of Pharoas. Abdullah bin Zubair and Ibn Abi Sarah marched in triumph across North Africa. These are the men whose miIitary ability was recognised by the world, and history remains a witness to their greatness.

In addition to some of these great examples, we have scores of other companions of the holy Prophet, who served humanity by their fair and efficient administration of different regions and cities of the ever expanding Islamic rule. Some of the outstanding names are Bazan bin Sasan who ruled over Yemen, Khalid bin Saeed over Sanaa, Muhajir bin Omayyah over Kinda, Ziyad bin Labeed (Hadhr Maut), Amr bin Hazm (Najran), Yazid bin Abi Sufyan (Taima), Ala bin Hadhrami (Bahrain).

There is an illustrious list of scholars and experts in Islamic law. Leading amongst them are Umar bin Khattab, Ali bin Abi Taleb, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Masood, Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-Aas, Ubai bin Ka'ab, Mu'azh bin Jabal, Zaid bin Thabit, Ibn Zubair and the holy Prophet's wives Ayesha and Umm Salma (May Allah be pleased with them all). They are the pillars of Islamic law whose judgments and opinions are still highly regarded by the Muslim world and they have a special place among the leading law givers of the world. There is yet another group of specialized scholars who focussed on compiling the historical and biographical details of the holy Prophet's life. They include hundreds of the holy Prophet's companions, prominent among them being Abu Hurairah, Abu Moosa Ash'ary, Anas bin Malik, Abu Saeed Khudri, Obadah bin Samit, Jabir bin Abdullah and Bar'a bin Azib. Then comes a dedicated group of self-sacrificing, self-denying men of God, whose only interest in life was the pursuit of Divine knowledge. They were seventy in number and their only worldly possessions were the clothes they had on their bodies. They lived on a terrace in the holy Prophet's

mosque. They spent all their time in worship. Learning the Divine message and teaching it to others was the only purpose of their life.

There are some unique individuals too, like Abu Zhar Ghaffari who is matchless in his outspoken support and love of truth. He had such strong faith in Allah that he would not save anything even for the next day's meal, trusting that Allah would provide it for him. The holy Prophet had given him the title, "Islam's Christ." Salman Farisi, who came from Persia, was a living picture of piety and God-consciousness. Abdullah bin Umar, who spent thirty years in sincere service and devotion, was offered the opportunity to be the caliph. He refused to accept it saying he could not tolerate the shedding of a single drop of blood of a Muslim under his rule. Musab bin Umair, who used to live in luxury before embracing Islam wearing clothes made of costliest silks, had patches sown on his clothes made from a coarse material. When he was killed fighting for Islam, his cloak was not long enough to cover his whole body, so his feet were covered with grass when he was buried. Othman bin Mazoon is known as the first mystic of Islam. There is Muhammad bin Salamah who used to say he would rather be killed by a Muslim than draw his sword against him. And there are men like Abu Darda who used to spend his days fasting and nights praying.

Among Prophet Muhammad's men there are such resourceful and wise personalities as Talha, Zubair, Mughira, Miqdad, Sa'ad bin Mu'azh, Sa'ad bin Ubadah, Usayyed bin Hudhair and Asad bin Zararah (May Allah be pleased with them all). There are eminent traders and wealthiest of men like Abdur Rahman bin Ouf and Sa'ad bin Zubair (May Allah be pleased with them) from Makkah, and there are great farmers from Madinah.

Still there is a group of innocent martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the path of Allah, spreading the message of Truth. They preferred to give away their lives rather than give up the Truth. The holy Prophet's wife Khadija's son from her previous marriage, Halah, was put to sword. Ammar's mother, Sumayyah (May Allah be pleased with her) was killed at the hands of Abu Jahal. Yasir was tortured to death by the non-believers of Makkah. Khubaib was killed on the cross. Zaid was put to sword. Haram bin Milham, along with sixty-nine of his companions, was treacherously killed at Bir Mauna by the tribes of Osayyah, Ra'al and Zakwan. At Rajee'a, Asim and his companions were killed by a hundred archers of the tribe of Banu Lehyan. In 7 AH, the Banu Salim killed Ibn Abi Al-Owaja and his forty-nine companions. Ka'ab bin Umar Ghaffari, along with his friends, was martyred at Zhat Al-Atlah. A world religion is very proud of its cross. But in Islam you find

not one cross but innumerable men and women were put on the cross. They sacrificed their lives for the sake of Truth, for the sake of Allah.

Be it a cross or the edge of a sword or the point of a spear, it is a means of inevitable torture to test the human will. Their pain is sharp but short lived. A far greater test of will and patience is for those who spent long years of persecution, mental torture and suffering but never wavered from the path of truth. There were those who were dragged on the hot sands of Makkah, or laid on burning coal that was extinguished by their blood and smouldering fat. Some were dragged on the hot sand with heavy rocks tied to their chests but they remained steadfast forever chanting the words of faith they had learnt from the Prophet of God—*There is no one worthy of worship but Allah*. Some of them survived by eating the leaves of Talh, a tree found in Makkah. Sa'ad bin Waqqas (MayAllah he pleased with him) says that in those days of social boycott, he could not stand the pangs of hunger one night and roasted a dried piece of leather he had found somewhere and gulped it down with water. Otbah bin Ghazwan says that there were seven of them together who had injured their mouths by eating such unnatural food. When Khabbab announced his Islam, he was made to lie on burning coal.

Bilal was a slave when he became a Muslim. His master would put a heavy stone on his chest and made him lie on hot sand. A rope was tied around his neck and he was dragged in the streets of Makkah. Abu Fukayha was similarly dragged in the streets. Ammar was made to lie on the hot sand and was mercilessly beaten. Zubair's uncle would wrap a mat round him and force him to inhale smoke. Saeed bin Zaid was often tied and beaten. Othman's uncle used to tie him down and beat him. But they were like men possessed. None of these measures could take them away from the path of truth that was shown to them by the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him).

My dear friends! Let us pause for a moment and consider some questions. Aren't these the same Arabs who were barbarians, nomads, uncivilized, pagans and immoral? Why this sudden revolution? How did an unlettered Prophet's education enlighten their minds, their souls and their hearts? How did it transform them into broad-minded, civilized law-abiding and law-giving people? How a defenceless, lonely messenger's missionary zeal gave those insignificant, humble Arabs new sources of courage and power, and turned them into brave leaders of men? Those who did not even know the name of God, became pious, God-conscious, obedient, bowing their heads in prayer and meditation all night. I have tried to let you have only a glimpse of Prophet Muhammad's centre of

learning or the University of Madinah and you have seen some of its students with their varied accomplishments. You have seen scholars, law makers, military commanders, judges, administrators, governors. You have seen the rich and the poor, the slaves and the masters, warriors and martyrs dying for the sake of Truth. Now, what conclusion have you reached? Can there be any other verdict except that Allah's Prophet, Muhammad's personality reflects the best and the noblest side of human nature. In him we find the noblest of virtues combined in one person. His many-sided virtues are reflected individually through his companions, like Abu Bakr and Umar, Othman and Ali, the first four Caliphs of Islam. His courage and bravery would show up in the battle field in the shape of Khalid, Abu Obaidah, Sa'ad, or Ja'afer Tayyar. His devotion to Allah and his piety could be seen in Ibn Umar, Abu Zhar, Salman and Abu Darda gracing the Mihrab of a mosque. His knowledge and wisdom would spring up through such illustrious scholars of Islam as Ibn Abbas, Ubai bin Ka'ab, Zaid bin Thabit and Abdullah bin Masoud. Sometimes his fortitude and patience would reflect in the suffering of Bilal, Suhaib, Ammar and Khubaib. His blessed presence was like the sun that shines over the whole world.Its high mountains and vast valleys, running rivers and green fields benefit from its light and warmth according to their own nature and capacity. Or like a cloud full of rain that falls over mountains, forests, fields and deserts and each absorbs it according to its capacity, resulting in lush trees, green fields and flowers of many colours and shapes.

There was a unity in variety in the diverse virtues displayed by the companions of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Outstanding in them all was the power or faith which worked like lightning. It was this spirit which inspired them all. It was the faith in one God, sincerity of purpose, selfless spirit of serving others, sympathy and love for fellow human beings and, above all, the intention to please Allah in whatever they did and wherever they went that inspired everyone. It was this spirit that moved a king or his subjects alike, the rich or the poor, a judge or a witness, an officer or a soldier, a teacher or a student, an ascetic or a trader, a warrior or a martyr. They were different in their colour, their temperament, their race but they believed in one Allah, the same Prophet, the same book and bowed in prayer in the same direction. They all worked for a common pur pose—to uphold the Truth, to serve one God and bring His Message to all mankind binding them in one common faith and to make this world a better place to live.

My dear friends! In today's talk I have tried to show you the many- sided virtues collectively present in one person, the holy Prophet Mu hammad (Peace be upon him). If, after your observation of nature, you believe that this world of ours is a

mixture of varied human talents, capabilities and temperaments, you will agree with me, that no one other than Prophet Muhammad can be the eternal and universal leader of humanity. The reason is that he was chosen by the Creator of this universe for this eternal role. In the following verse of the holy Quran, the last message to humanity from Allah, it is stated very clearly:

Say: If ye do love god follow me god will love you

For those who love God and want to be loved by God, there cannot be any other choice, because Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has shown the way of love by living every moment of his life in Allah's love. Therefore only he can proclaim, 'Follow me!" Whether you be a king or a subject, a commander or a soldier, a teacher or a student, rich or poor and helpless, in whatever capacity you want to serve Allah and His creatures, follow the example of the holy Prophet and you will never fail to find the best example in his practice.

O Allah, send Your Mercy and Blessings on him, his family and his Companions.

Lecture 6. The Practical Aspect of Prophet Muhammad's Life and its Practicability

My dear friends! How should the messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) be followed, and why? For that purpose we have to show you, in today's talk, the practicability of his life pattern. At this point in history, this chapter is almost entirely empty regarding other messengers of Allah or the founders of other religions. But this very aspect of Prophet Muhammad's biography is the fullest and the longest chapter of his life. And this very point should be enough to decide who can rightfully be the leader and Seal of Prophets". There is no shortage of good instructions, sound advice and sweet words in this world, but what matters most is good deeds. If we go through the available histories of various religious leaders, we will find interesting philosophies, fascinating parables, great pieces of oratory and artistic use of words, which will certainly move us and please us momentarily. But what is lacking there is the practical application of those words of wisdom and proving their goodness and effectiveness through personal example.
The practical aspect of human personality is reflected in its moral and ethical behaviour. Which heavenly book, apart from the holy Quran can now claim and bring evidence to the exalted moral conduct of its Prophet? But the holy Quran clearly says about the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

**"And you will definitely have a reward that will never end.
And you are surely on an excellent standard of character."
(Chpl.68:Vrs.3-4)**

The first verse promises an unfailing reward from Almighty Allah, whereas the second verse explains why he deserves such a high reward. So Allah's own words bear witness to the exalted moral conduct of holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and hence the endless reward. The unlettered Prophet of Makkah was made to proclaim through the Divine Revelation:

**"O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do?"
(Chp.61:Vrs.2)**

He alone deserved to say that because he himself practised what he preached. Let us look at the preacher on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and the preacher on the Mount of Safa in Makkah from this perspective. We will see that Christ's present biography fails to present any practical examples, any examples of his actual practice, whereas Prophet Muhammad's life history is full of the records of

his noble practice. Tolerance and forgiveness are commendable virtues. A non-violent person, who does not harm or kill others, does not rob, or does not accumulate wealth, is no doubt a virtuous person. But these virtues are passive virtues. He did no harm, but did he stand up to save a helpless person? He did not take anyone's life himself, but did he save anyone from being killed? He did not build a house for himself; but did he shelter the homeless? This world requires these active and positive virtues. And that indeed is the noble, moral conduct.

Let us look at some Divine evidence about Prophet Muhammad's character through the verses of the holy Quran:

"So, (O Prophet) it is through mercy from Allah that you are gentle to them. Had you been rough and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you…" (Chp.3:Vrs.159)

These verses describe the extremely gentle and endearing nature of prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The claim and its proof is mentioned together in the holy Book. Had he not been tender-hearted and polite, the basically wild, fearless and harsh Arabs would never have come close to him.

Another verse of the holy Quran states:

"Surely, there has come to you, from your midst, a Messenger who feels it very hard on him if you face a hardship, who is very anxious for your welfare, and for the believers he is very kind, very merciful."
(9:128)

He was a mercy to the whole creation. It grieved him to see people suffering. It was extremely painful for him to see people rejecting the Truth and insisting stubbornly on living in sin. He only wished their well-being. It is his ardent love and sympathy for mankind that forces him to preach and call them to the service of one God and live a God-conscious life. He is extremely kind to those who accept his call. This verse is a proof that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was a well-wisher of mankind in general, and loving and kind to the believers in particular. That is the heavenly evidence in favour of his noble conduct.

The holy Quran is the heavenly Book. It is the word of God, revealed to His last Prophet, for the guidance of mankind. It contains the commandments of Allah and His instructions for the benefit of all mankind. Indeed, the holy Prophet's life is the holy Quran in practice. Whatever instructions and commandments of Allah were sent down, being His Messenger he was the first to obey. He practised them while he preached them. Declaration of Faith in the Oneness of God, Salat (five-

time obligatory prayer), Fasting, Hajj, Zakat, spending on the needy and destitute, fighting in the path of Allah, self-sacrifice, steadfastness, fortitude, patience, thanks-giving and other principles of good moral behavior that he taught, he first demonstrated through personal example. His life became an embodiment of what had been revealed for human guidance in the holy Quran. It is related that when some of his companions asked his wife Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with them all) about the holy Prophet's practice and his character, she asked them whether they had not read the Quran. His life was a complete reflection of the Quran. The holy Quran is words while the holy Prophet's life is its interpretation in practice.

No one can ever know a man's morals, his habits and behaviour better than his wife. When Prophet Muhammad proclaimed to be Allah's Prophet, he had been married to Khadijah (May Allah be pleased with her) for fifteen years. This is long enough for one to know each other's nature, temperament and behaviour fully well. This knowledge had certainly left its mark on Khadijah's heart. The moment he told her about his Prophethood, she wholeheartedly believed him and supported him. When the Prophet expressed his worry and distress because of the immense burden of his mission, she reassured him saying: "O Prophet of Allah, Allah will never abandon you because you always treat your kin fairly and kindly, you help people to pay their debts, you help the poor, you are hospitable to your guests, you always support what is right, and help the people in distress." (Al-Bukhari)

These are some of the practical virtues he had shown before he was proclaimed a prophet.

After Khadijah's death, the Prophet's most dearly loved wife was Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with them). She remained with him for nine years. She says that he never complained of others' wrongs. When he was done wrong, he never took revenge for himself but always forgave them. He stayed away from all kinds of bad deeds. He would never hit a slave, a maid, a servant or even an animal. When he was asked for some thing, he would never refuse. He never turned down a rightful request.

Of his relatives, his cousin Ali was his closest companion. He had remained with him day and night since his childhood. He says, "The holy Prophet had a cheerful nature. He was kind-hearted and had mild manners. He was courteous. He was not rude and never uttered a harsh word to hurt anyone. He never looked for peoples' shortcomings. If someone asked him for something improper, he did not refuse bluntly but usually kept silent. Those who knew him understood what he meant from his manner. It was because he did not want to break anyone's heart. He would rather console than hurt people. He was extremely kind and compassionate." Ali goes on to say, "He was extremely generous and helpful. He

was always truthful. He had a gentle temperament. In his company, people felt comfortable and relaxed. When they first saw him, they were overwhelmed by his personality but when they got to know him well, they began to adore him."
Having read the holy Prophet's biography, Gibbon, the well known English historian, has expressed the same opinion.
His stepson, who was from Khadijah's previous marriage, was brought up by him. He says about the holy Prophet, "He was of gentle disposition. He was not harsh or rude. He did not hurt anybody's feelings. He never said anything that might show disrespect to others. Whatever food was presented to him, he would graciously accept. If he did not like it, he would not criticise it. He never lost his temper or took revenge for himself but he supported a truthful cause with all his might and showed his anger when someone opposed the truth."
This is some of the evidence of the people who were close to him and knew him intimately well and it clearly shows the exalted conduct of the Prophet of Allah (Peace be upon him). The most shining feature of his life is that he practised whatever he preached as a Prophet. He called people to God's love and to remember him in all circumstances. The revolution that this principle brought, into the lives of his immediate followers, is a glorious chapter of human history but let us first look at his own life from this perspective. There never was a moment when his heart was not filled with Allah's love and his tongue would not sing Allah's praise sitting, standing or walking about; eating or drinking or lying on his side. At all times and in all circumstances, he would always remember Allah and celebrate His praise. A great portion of his traditions consist of his supplications and prayers that he said on different occasions, suiting the time or the circumstance. A book of some two hundred pages called 'Hisn Haseen' is a collection of those prayers. Every sentence of the prayers shows a tremendous awareness of the greatness of Almighty Allah, and the holy Prophet's awe, love and devotion to Him. In the holy Quran, Allah's good servants are praised in these words:

"Who remember Allah standing and sitting, and (lying) on their sides…"
(Chp.3:Vrs. 191)

That depicts the very picture of the holy Prophet's life. His wife Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) says that in all circumstances and at every moment of his life, he remembered Allah.
He conveyed Allah's command to the people that they had to establish obligatory prayers five times a day. But himself he used to pray at eight different times of the day: after sunrise, mid-morning, mid-day, afternoon, after sunset, at night, pre-dawn and then at dawn. For ordinary Muslims, it is obligatory to

perform two Rakas after dawn, three after sunset and four each at other times. But the Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to pray additional Rakas which came to around sixty every day and night whereas on his followers it was obligatory to pray a total of seventeen Rak 'as daily. After the five-time prayer was ordained by Allah, the ordinary Muslims were exempted from the pre-dawn prayer, but the holy Prophet continued to perform this prayer throughout his life every night. Ocassionally, he would stand up in prayer all night. As a result, his feet would be swollen. Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her), would say "Allah has forgiven you all your faults, then why do you put so much strain on yourself?" He would reply, O Ayeshah Shouldn't I be a grateful servant of my Lord" this means, his long prayers were more of love and devotion to Allah than of his awe for Him. Sometimes, while praying, he would take so long bowing to Allah that the onlookers thought he had forgotten to prostrate.

He had started offering prayers since the inception of his Prophet-hood. The non-believers of Makkah were extremely hostile to him at that time. But he never cared and would pray in the holy Haram right in their midst. Many times his enemies attacked him while he was offering his prayers, but even then he kept praying and never discontinued his prayer because of those attacks. The hardest time to offer prayers was when the Muslims were facing their enemy during a battle. As soon as the time came for an obligatory prayer, the Muslims stood in straight rows to pray, led by the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). In the crucial battle of Badr, while the Muslims were facing the enemy, he was in prostration in front of Allah, invoking His Mercy and seeking His Help. The holy Prophet was never late for the prescribed prayer. He never missed an obligatory prayer in his whole life except on two occasions. Once, during the battle of the Ditch, when in the heat of the battle there was no chance at all to offer the afternoon prayer. And then at another time when after a nightlong tiring journey, nobody was able to get up for the dawn prayer, the Prophet offered that prayer after sunrise. During the last days of his life, he had high fever but he did not miss his congregational prayers. Even when this illness had drained all his energy, he would come to the mosque supported by two of his companions, so that he should not miss an obligatory prayer. Three days before his death, while trying to join the Prayers in the mosque, he lost conciousness three times and was forced to pray alone.

That was the holy Prophet's practical example of love and devotion to Allah.

He enjoined the Muslims to fast. The Muslims are required to fast during the month of Ramadhan, thirty days a year. But, there never was a month or a week when the holy Prophet was not fasting. Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) says that when he began fasting, it seemed he would never stop. He forbade the Muslims to fast for longer than a day, but himself he would fast for two or

sometimes three days at a stretch without taking any food at all. His worthy companions wanted to follow suit but he would not allow them saying, 'Who amongst you is like me? My Lord provides sustenance for me." He fasted continuously during the months of Sha'ban and Ramadhan every year. In addition to that he would fast on the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth day of every month. He would fast for ten days in the month of Muharram and six days in the month of Shawwal. Every week, Monday and Thursday were fixed for fasting.
That was the practical example of his fasting.
He ordered the Muslims to pay Zakat and spend on the needy. But he was the first to set an example. You have already heard his first wife Khadijah's evidence who had said "O Messenger of Allah! You help people who are unable to pay their debts. You help the poor and spend money on people in distress." He did not ask his followers to give up everything they owned. Nor did he shut the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven for the wealthy. He simply asked them to spend a portion of their wealth for charitable purposes for the sake of Allah:

"…and spend out of what We have provided them."
(Chap 2: Vrs 3)

The holy Prophet's own example was that he spent on others everything he owned. There was no shortage of money because spoils of war were coming into Madinah from everywhere, but that money was meant for others. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) would spend a bare minimum on himself and his family. For them it remained the same old life of austerity. After the victory at Khyber (in 7 AH), it became usual for him to fix a yearly allowance for his wives, but it never lasted a whole year because they too, would share most of it with the poor and the needy. Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with him) says that the holy Prophet was the most generous of men and his generosity knew no bounds, particularly in the holy month of Ramadhan, He never refused anyone who came to him asking for help. He did not like eating anything by himself, no matter how little he had; he would share it with others. It was his instruction to everyone "If any Muslim dies leaving an unsettled debt, let me know so that I should pay on his behalf And if he leaves anything behind, his relatives will inherit that" Once a rustic asked him roughly, "O Muhammad! (These provisions) do not belong to you, or to your father. Load them on to my camel" The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not mind his rudeness and ordered that he be given a camel-load of barley and dates. He used to say "I am but a distributer and a custodian. The real sustainer is Allah." Abu Zhar (May Allah be pleased with him) says, one night, while he was having a walk with the holy Prophet, he said "Abu Zhar! If this

mountain of Uhad turned into gold for me, I would not like that three nights should pass and I still had a Dinar left with me, except that I should keep some to pay a debt."

Dear friends! The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not merely utter beautiful words, rather they display his sincere determination, and that remained his practice throughout his life. Once, some tribute was sent to him from Bahrain. He directed that it should be left in the courtyard of his mosque. When he came for the dawn prayer next morning, he did not even glance at the treasure. After the prayers he started distributing it until none was left. Having finished it he got up as if it was some dust that had settled on his clothes. On another occasion, four camels loaded with grain were sent to him and his family. Some was used to pay an earlier debt and some was distributed to the needy. He asked Bilal (May Allah be pleased with him) if he had given it all to the poor. He replied that there was still some left because no one had come to take it. The holy Prophet said: So long as this worldly possession is with me, I cannot go home," So he stayed all night in the mosque. The next morning, when Bilal gave away the remaining grain and informed him that Allah had relieved him of the burden, the Prophet thanked Allah and then went home. Once, against his usual practice, after finishing the afternoon prayer, he suddenly went back home and then returned to the mosque after a while. He explained to the people that he had remembered a piece of gold lying at home. He was afraid that it might still remain in his house after sunset. His wife, Umm Salma (May Allah be pleased with her) relates: "Once he came to me in a very sad and dejected mood. I asked him the reason for that." He said, "Yesterday we had seven Dinars. A day has passed and they are still lying in the house." Can there be an example greater than this one. He is lying on his death bed, suffering from severe illness. He suddenly remembers he has a few gold coins in his house. He orders that they should be given away to the needy at once, saying, Is Muhammad going to meet his Lord in the state that he has left behind gold coins?'

That was the practical example of the holy Prophet's charity and generosity.

He gave people the lesson of self-denial and contentment. But what was his own attitude in this regard? You have already heard how money was pouring into Madinah in the form of taxes, tribute, Zakat and donations for charitable purposes from all corners of Arabia. But the life in the holy Prophet's house remained as austere as ever. After his death, Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) used to say "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) left this world but he never had two full meals a day." She says that when he died he had nothing in his house except a handful of grain for that day's meal. He had pawned his armour with a Jew for a small amount of oats. He used to say, 'It is unbecoming for the son of Adam to have more than these things: a simple house for shelter, a piece

of clothing to wear, a simple meal and water to fill the stomach.' These were not just beautiful words. They painted the actual picture of his own life. His house consisted of one small room made from mud, and had a roof of date-palm leaves and camel wool. Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) says that she never had to fold the holy Prophet's clothes, meaning he possessed no clothes other than the ones he had already on. Once a beggar came to him complaining that he was starving. He sent for some food from his house. The reply came that there was nothing except water. Abu Talha (May Allah be pleased with him) relates that once he saw the holy Prophet lying on the floor in his mosque. He was tossing and turning with the intense pain of hunger. Once his companions complained to him of starvation. They had each tied a stone to their stomach to lessen the pangs of hunger. In reply, he showed them his stomach where two stones had been tied. He had had nothing to eat for two days. Many a times he could hardly speak because of intense hunger. Once he came out of his house and he was feeling extremely hungry. He went to his friend Abu Ayub's house. He at once brought some fresh dates and began to prepare a meal. When the meal was ready, the Prophet put some meat on a piece of bread and asked that it be sent to his daughter Fatimah's house who had not eaten for several days.

He had great love for his daughter Fatimah and her two sons, Hassan and Hussein (May Allah be pleased with them). But the holy Prophet never showed this love by means of costly clothes or gold and silver jewelleryl When he saw her wearing a gold necklace given to her by her husband, Ali (May Allah be pleased with him), he said, 'O Fatima do you want people to say that Muhammad's daughter is wearing a necklace of fire around her neck?' Fatimah at once took off the necklace, had it sold and had a slave freed for its price. Similarly, when Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) wore bracelets of gold, he told her that it was unbecoming of Muhammad's wife and asked her to take them off. He used to say 'Man's needs in this worldly life are like those of a wayfarer. "That is what he said but in practice he used a lot less than even a wayfarer. Once, some of his close companions came to see him and noticed the marks of the rough mat on his body. They requested him to allow them to make a soft mattress for him:

He replied that he had nothing to do with the comforts of this temporary life. This worldly life, in his sight, was like that of a rider's who stops for a little while to take some rest under the shade of a tree and goes on to complete his journey.

In the 9th year of his migration to Madinah, the rule of Islam had extended to Yemen in the south and Syria in the north. But as its ruler his total possessions were: a piece of cloth that he wrapped round his waist, a bare bed, a pillow filled with the bark of date-palm, a handful of grain, a skin of an animal and few jars of water.

That was his personal practice while he preached others to live a life of simplicity and contentment.
My dear friends! You must have heard many a speech about the merits of self-sacrifice, but did you ever see the speaker applying that golden rule on himself? Here again, you will find the best example in the life of the Prophet of Madinah (Peace be upon him). When he taught people the nobility of self-sacrifice, the noblest examples of this virtue came forth from his own life. His love for his daughter Fatimah (May Allah be pleased with her) is evident. In the early days of Madinah, life for the Muslims was very hard. Fatimah had developed blisters on her hands from grinding grain in the hand-mill, and drawing water from the well had left rope marks on her body. One day she came to the holy Prophet to ask for a maid He replied that he could not meet her demand because the poor of Suffah were needier. In another tradition it is reported that the orphans of Bath had made a similar request before her. So they were given preference and she returned without any maid. Once he was presented a shawl. Somebody remarked it was a beautiful shawl. The Prophet (Peace be upon him) gave it to him although he himself badly needed one at that time. He was visiting one of his companions. The Prophet realized that his host did not have enough for the guest. He sent him to Ayeshah (May Allah be pleased with her) to bring a basketful of flour. That happened to be the only provision in the Prophet's house for that day's meal. One day he brought home the destitute companions of Suffah and asked Ayeshah to prepare some meal for them. It consisted of some oatmeal, a dish made from dried dates, and in the end a bowl of milk. There was nothing left that day in the holy Prophet's house after serving his guests.
With such examples he taught self-sacrifice to others.
If you want to see the glory of faith in Allah and total reliance and dependence on His Mercy, look at the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (Peace be upon him). To him Allah's Commands had come in these words of the holy Quran:

"So, be patient. Surely Allah's promise is true, and let not the disbelievers shake your firmness."
(Chap 30: Vrs 60)

He was born amongst an ignorant and illiterate people. They were so severe in their bigotry that they could not hear a word spoken against the many gods they worshipped. They were headstrong and ferocious and were always ready to kill or to be killed for the sake of their beliefs. But the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) took no notice of them and raised the voice of the Oneness of God in the middle of holy Ka'bah. The chiefs of Qureish used to assemble there but the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) would offer prayers to Allah right in front of them,

bowing and prostrating to One God with the least concern about his personal safety. When this verse of holy Quran was revealed to him:

"Now, proclaim what you are commanded to…."
(Chap 15: Vrs 94)

He climbed the Mount Safa and preached the message of God to the Qureish of Makkah who had assembled there in response to his call. The Qureish of Makkah tried to dissuade him from his mission by all possible means. They persecuted him. They threw rubbish over him while he was praying in the holy haram. They tried to strangulate him. They spread; thorns in his way. But he remained steadfast and nothing could stop him from calling people to the right path. He was under the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib. When, under pressure from Qureish, he hinted at withdrawing his support, the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) told him with great determination, 'O uncle! If the Qureish were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I will never abandon my mission." At last, he was forced to live along with his family and his clan, Banu Hashim, in a mountain pass outside Makkah for three years. Their boycott was so complete that even food was not allowed to reach them. They were forced to eat the leaves of trees in order to survive. When the Qure'ish failed to stop him by these measures, they finally plotted to murder him. The holy Prophet remained steadfast. He had to migrate to Madinah, with the pagans of Makkah in hot pursuit. They nearly caught up with him when he had taken refuge in a cave, called Thaur. Just a few yards separate the fully armed Qureish and the unarmed Prophet of God (Peace be upon him). His companion, Abu Bakr, cries out with fear "O Allah's Prophet! We are only two." But a soothing voice tells him "Abu Bakr! We are not two but three. Have no fear, for God is with us."
During the same journey, Suraqa Bin Ja'sham almost approaches them on his horse with a threatening spear in his hand. Abu Bakr cries "O Prophet of Allah! We have been spotted". But Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) is as calm as ever, reciting the holy Quran and having complete faith in his Lord.
Even in the relative safety of Madinah, there was a threat of the local Jews, the hypocrites and the terrorists of Qureish. People used to stand guard outside the Prophet's house, until this verse of the Quran was revealed: Allah will protect you from people." He at once told the guards to go away because Allah had taken his protection upon Himself.
On his return from the campaign of Najd, he was having a rest under a tree, with none of his companions around. A bedouin approached him with a sword. He woke up and heard him say "O Muhammad! Who can save you from me now?

Undaunted by the critical situation, with complete calm and confidence the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, 'Allah ". The enemy was overawed by his faith in Allah that he put his sword back in the sheath.

In the Battle of Badr, three hundred barely armed Muslims are facing one thousand warriors of Qureish, covered in armour from head to toe. But where is the commander of these three hundred mostly unarmed men? Away from the battle, he has raised his hands in prayer to Allah. Some times prostrating, sometimes raising his hands, he implores his Lord: "O Allah! If this small group of faithful men is wiped out today, no one will be left to worship You in this world.'

There were occasions when the Muslims were overwhelmed by the enemy and had to retreat from the battle. But the holy Prophet with complete reliance on Allah's help, confidently faced the enemy and stood there like an adamant rock.

In the Battle of Uhad, most of the Muslims retreated under pressure from the enemy but Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) did not leave his position even though he was being attacked from all sides by rocks, arrows, spears and swords. He was seriously injured in the face, lost a tooth, a piece of his helmet pierced his cheeks but he did not believe in the sword, he believed in Allah, in Whose help his faith never wavered and Who had promised to protect him from the people. In the Battle of Hunain, ten thousand archers of the enemy rained down their arrows upon the Muslims. They were shaken for a while and began to retreat, but the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) was facing the enemy chanting, It is no lie that I am the Messenger of God I am Muhammad, the son of Abdul Muttalib!" He dismounted and raised his hands in prayer saying he was the servant and the Prophhet of Allah.

Dear friends! Have you ever heard of a commander-in-chief who never leaves a battlefield even though he is outnumbered by the enemy, whose men are not armed properly, or when they have begun to retreat leaving him alone to face the enemy? His courage and fortitude do not allow him to leave the battle and save his own life, nor does he raise his sword to defend himself, Instead he turns to Almighty Allah for His Heavenly Help, completely dissociating himself from all earthly powers. That is the Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

You must have heard the beautiful saying. "Love your enemy!" but may not have seen it in practice. Let me show you some examples from the holy Prophet's life in Madinah where he was the absolute ruler. I will not quote any examples from his early Makkan life where he was helpless and persecuted, because in my opinion servitude and helplessness are not equivalent to mercy and forgiveness. How can you really forgive when you, have no power to take revenge? When the holy Prophet left Makkah for Madinah, the chiefs of Qureish announced a reward of 100 camels for the holy Prophet's head. Suraqa bin Ja'sham armed himself and pursued the Prophet for the sake of that reward. Once he approached so near

him that his companion, Abu Bakr, lost his nerve. But the holy Prophet prayed to Allah and before Suraqa could do any harm, his horse was caught in soft sand and could not move. It happened three times. Suraqa cast his arrow to divine what course of action he should choose? Three times he got the answer that he should not follow them. Finally, he gave up and requested the holy Prophet to grant him a document saying that he would be safe at the hands of the Muslims when God granted him victory over the Qureish. The holy Prophet granted his request and handed him a paper to that effect.

After Makkah fell, he came to the holy Prophet to embrace Islam, but the Prophet never even mentioned Suraqa's crime of that day to him.

Who was Abu Sufyan? The holy Prophet's deadliest enemy, who led the campaign against the Muslims in Badr, Uhad, and the battle of the Ditch etc. Numerous Muslims were killed by his orders. How many times did he plot to assassinate the holy Prophet? He proved to be the bitterest enemy of Islam. After the victory of Makkah, he was at the mercy of the Muslims. Nearly everyone recommended to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) that Abu Sufyan should be killed for his crimes against the Muslims. But when he came, along with the Prophet's uncle Abbas, and threw himself at his mercy, "the mercy to the worlds" not only granted him a pardon but announced that whoever entered Abu Sufyan's house in Makkah to take refuge, will remain safe from a Muslim's sword.

Abu Sufyan's wife Hynd, who participated in the battle of Uhad, exhorted the Qureishi soldiers to kill the Muslims by singing war songs with her friends. She mutilated the body of the holy Prophet's uncle and Islam's hero Hamzah, and tried to eat his liver. It was a most tormenting sight for the holy Prophet to find his beloved uncle's mutilated body after the battle. After the victory of Makkah, she came to the Prophet (Peace be up him) hiding her face behind a veil, and even then addressed him in a rude manner. But the holy Prophet granted her pardon, without even mentioning her previous crimes. She had never expected such miraculous mercy and forgiveness and cried out "O Muhammad! No tent was so hateful to me than the sight of your tent before this day. But now no tent is dearer to me than your tent!"

It was Wahshi who had killed the holy Prophet's uncle Hamzah in the battle of Uhad. After the fall of Makkah, he fled to Taif. When that too was captured, he had no place to go. People said to him, "You have still not recognized Muhammad. You can have no refuge except in the mercy of the Prophet." A desperate Wahshi presents himself to the holy Prophet. He looks at him and remembers the beloved uncle's death with tearful eyes. His murderer is at his mercy but he forgives him saying 'Try not to come before me because that brings back the memory of my uncle,"

Ikrimah was the son of Abu Jahal, Prophet Muhammad's tormentor and the greatest enemy of the Muslims. He had given the holy Prophet the maximum trouble. Ikrimah himself had taken part in many battles against Islam. When Makkah fell, he knew his crimes and his family's crimes against the innocent Muslims. He fled to Yemen. But his wife had become Muslim and had come to know the holy Prophet's immense capacity to forgive his worst enemies. She followed Ikrimah to Yemen and brought him back to Madinah. When the holy Prophet learnt of Ikrimah's arrival, he was so overjoyed that when he rushed to welcome him, his mantle fell off his body. In a voice brimming with joy he welcomed him with these words "O refugee rider, you are most welcome." Think for a moment who is being welcomed in this manner; who is being granted a full pardon. It was Ikrimah's father who had caused the greatest pain to the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He had had rubbish thrown over him, had attacked him during prayer, had tried to strangulate him. He had plotted with the other leaders of Qureish to murder him. He had led the Qureish in the battle of Badr. He had thwarted all attempts at peace. Yet, when his son came to Madinah, he was welcomed with such joy and happiness by the Prophet (Peace be upon him).
Habbar bin Al-Aswad is another criminal. He is believed to have killed the holy Prophet's daughter Zainab (May Allah be pleased with her). After the victory in Makkah, he is sentenced to death. He wants to run away to Persia; but changes his mind and throws himself at the holy Prophet's mercy saying "O Messenger of Allah! I wanted to run away to Persia but then I thought of your tolerance, kindness and forgiveness. Here I am at your mercy. All the information you got about my crimes is true" Hearing this confession, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) forgives him, knowing well that this man is his beloved daughter's murderer.
Umair bin Wahab, is sent to Madinah by a Qureishi leader of Badr. He is carrying a poisoned dagger with the intention to kill the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him). He is captured and his guilt is proven. Yet, he is par'doned and released. Safwan bin Umayyah was the chief who had sent Umair to assassinate the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). He had promised Umair that if he was killed, he would look after his entire family and would also pay all his debts. After the fall of Makkah he ran away to Jeddah with the intention to flee to Yemen by sea. Umair came to the holy Prophet pleading for Safwan. He said 'O Prophet of Allah! Safwan is the chief of his tribe. He has run away out of fear. He might throw himself into the sea." The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) granted him safety. Umair again requested him to give him something as a sign of the Prophet's pardon. He gave him his head-dress. Umair took it to Safwan who was still reluctant. He said, I still fear for my life, if I went to Muhammad." Umair, who had himself carried a poisoned dagger to kill Allah's Messenger reassured him by say

ing, "O Safwan you do not yet know the kindness and compassion of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him)." Finally he decided to come to Madinah and surrendered himself. He asked the holy Prophet if he had been pardoned and given safe passage. He insisted that he would not embrace Islam. He asked for a period of two months to make up his mind. He was given four months instead of two. This period was not up when he had a change of heart and came into the fold of Islam.

The holy Prophet led a campaign against Khyber, which was a great centre of Jewish power. After many battles the city fell. A Jewish woman presented him some meat which had actually been poisoned. As soon as he put a piece in his mouth, he realized that the meat was poisoned. The woman was brought before him and confessed her crime. The holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) took no revenge and she was released without being punished. The holy Prophet suffered from the after effects of that poison for the rest of his life. On his return from the campaign of Najd, he was having a rest under a tree at midday. His sword hung from the tree. None of his companions was near him when a bedouin managed to sneak up to him and pulled his sword to attack him. Suddenly the Prophet woke up. Waving his sword he said, Muhammad who can save you now?' A confident voice told him 'Allah! He was so overcome by this reply that he put his sword back. In the meantime, the holy Prophet's companions had gathered round him but the bedouin was allowed to go unpunished.

On another occasion, a non-believer was captured while he was waiting to attack the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him). When he saw the Prophet, he began to tremble with fear. He reassured him and said, 'You could not have killed me even if you had attacked me." Similarly, a group of eighty soldiers was captured during the campaign of Makkah who wanted to attack him from mount Tan'eem near Makkah. When he was informed of their plan, the Prophet let them go flee,

My dear friends! You are familiar with Taif. The city where the holy Prophet sought refuge in the early days of his persecution in Makkah, but was rejected and its people refused even to listen to his message. Its chief and his clan mocked at him and incited their vulgar people to make fun of him. The ill-mannered people of the city gathered round him and when he passed through them, they began to throw stones at him. His blood began to flow from his wounds to fill his shoes. When he tried to sit somewhere to take some respite, they forced him to walk again and continued throwing stones at him. The experience was so torturing for the holy Prophet that after nine years when Ayeshah asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! What was the hardest day in ur life he referred to that day in Taif In the eighth year of Al-Hijra, the Muslims had gained power and a contingent of Muslim army had surrounded the city of Taif The siege prolonged and the Muslims lost many men. The holy Prophet decided

to withdraw his forces but the Muslims insisted on continuing the fight till Victory. 'Ihey requested him to pray for the destruction of the city. He raised his hands in prayer but said "O Allah. Show the people of Taif the right path and let them surrender to Islam." Whose salvation is being asked for here? It is the same city of Taif whose people had refused to give him refuge. Instead, they had stoned him and tortured him.

In the battle of Uhad, the Muslims were forced to retreat under severe pressure of the enemy. The holy Prophet himself was surrounded by the enemy. He was attacked from all sides by stones, arrows and swords, He lost a tooth. Some pieces of his helmet pierced his cheeks, his face was covered in his own blood. Even at that moment he was heard praying to Allah for his enemy, saying, "How can those people gain salvation, who are bent upon murdering their own Prophet? O Allah! show my people the right path, because they don't know me yet" This is the sermon of the Mount Olives: 'Love thy enemy!' in actual practice, and not just a beautiful poetic expression.

Ibn Abd Yalil, the chieftain of Taif, whose clan had tortured the holy Prophet, came to Madinah with a delegation. The holy Prophet welcomed him and had his tent pitched in the court of his holy mosque. He honored him with a daily visit after the isha prayers each night. Who was this man? The same who had mocked at him in Taif and stoned him! That is "Love thy enemy and forgive him."

The sanctuary of the holy Ka'bah was the place where the leaders of the Qureish had assembled and decided that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) should be assassinated. That is where he was laughed at. They had thrown rubbish over him while he was praying there. After the fall of Makkah, it was the same place where all of them were standing vanquished before him, their heads bowed in shame. They included those who had done everything in their power to eliminate the Muslims and those who had written lampoons to mock at their holy Prophet (Peace be upon him); those who used to call him names, who had rejected him as a Prophet; those who had thrown stones on him and spread thorns in his path; those who had drawn swords on him; those who had killed his innocent loved ones and mutilated their bodies; those who had tortured the poor Muslims by branding their bodies with hot iron, dragging them over the hot sands of Makkah, burning them over flaming coals and piercing their bodies with spears. All those criminals were now standing with bowed heads before Prophet Muhammad surrounded by ten thousand Muslim warriors with swords drawn, waiting for a signal from their commander (Peace be upon him). Addressing the Qureish, he asked "O Qureish! Tell me what I shall do with you today? 'They said, "Muhammad You are our noble brother. You are our noble nephew." He said, "I say to you what Allah's Prophet Joseph had said to his callous brothers: This day let no reproach be (cast) on you. Go your way for you are free!'"

That is how enemies are forgiven and loved. That is Prophet Muhammad's way of teaching love and forgiveness, not by beautiful words alone but through actual practice and personal example for the world to follow.

That is the basic point that distinguishes Islam from all other religions. The followers of all other religions call to the virtuous and sweet words of their Prophets or their leaders. They have nothing to offer except those sayings which they keep repeating. On the other hand, Islam calls people to the worship of one God not by mere words of its Prophet, but calls to follow his example. When Prophet Muhammad was leaving this world, he had said, "I am leaving behind (for your guidance) two essentially good things; the Word of God and my personal practice." These two guide lines have remained intact upto our time and will remain unchanged till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, Islam's call has always been to follow the Book of Allah as practised by His holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). The holy Book states: "Verily in the Messenger of Allah ye have a good example."

Islam proudly presents its Prophet (Peace be upon him) as a living example of its Book. It is the only religion in the world whose Prophet presents his own practice and his own example along with his principles and his teachings. For those who want to learn how to pray, he has his words and his method. He says, "Perform your prayers the way you see me praying." When he teaches to be good and kind to wives and children, he says, 'The best amongst you is the one who is good to his family and I am the best of all in being good to my family." Look at the way he teaches the Divine Message to the people on the occasion of his last Hajj. Over a hundred thousand devotees are gathered around him. People are being preached the final message of Allah. All the false and cruel man-made traditions are being condemned and the unending habit of bloodshed is being eliminated. Look how with every instruction the first example to apply the laws of Allah is his own example. He says, "Today the ancient Arab tradition of vendetta is abolished. All murders committed before Islam are not to be avenged. They are all to be forgiven. First of all, I forgive the murderer of my nephew Rabeeah bin Harith." He declares, 'All the pre-Islamic deals based on usury are nullified today. First of all, I cancel all such transactions of my uncle Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib."

After the sanctity of human life and property, the most important thing is human dignity and honour. The most difficult thing is to eliminate those social conventions that are related to human honour but are actually harmful to society. It is extremely difficult to reform or root out such social traditions. It demands a lot of moral courage to challenge the time-honoured conventional practices, especially when the reformer's own honour is at risk. Therefore, there are very few reformers in human history who dare to change the habits of a people. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) taught people that all human beings have

equal rights. In the Arab society of his time slaves were considered to be the lowest in society. The holy Prophet taught them that all human-beings are equal by adopting a slave as his son. This was done in a society where they were so conscious of the status of different tribes that one would not kill in a battle a person of a lower rank lest his noble sword be defiled by a less noble blood. In that society, the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) declared, "O People! You are all Sons of Adam and Adam was created from clay. The black has no preference over the white or the white over the black or the non-Arab over the Arab, nor is the Arab nobler than the non-Arab. The better among you is the one who is more God-fearing." This teaching gave equal status to all and brought the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the slave and the master on equal footing. Again the practical example came from the holy Prophet himself. His clan was considered the noblest of Qureish. He arranged the marriage of his cousin with a slave, Zaid, whom he had adopted as his son. When the Divine Revelation came that adopted sons do not actually become sons, Zaid who was called Zaid bin Muhammad was the first to be called Zaid the son of Harithah, after his real father. It was considered a shame for an Arab to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son. The custom of adoption had caused many rivalries and rifts among the tribes. It was only a word of mouth, nothing based on reality. This evil custom had to be challenged and abolished. The holy Prophet, against the age old custom of the Arabs, married the divorced wife of Zaid bin Haritha thus setting an example which led to the eventual end of an evil practice.

There is no end to such incidents and there is no dearth of examples. But the time is short and perhaps today I have taken a little more of your time than usual. My dear friends In the light of my presentation, have a look from Adam to Jesus and at each reformer from India to Syria. Can you fmd examples of such complete and practicable guidance?

Have patience with me for a few more words. Some orators, in their high flown poetic style, talk of a transcendental spiritual love of God. But according to their own claim "a tree is known by its fruit." I would like to ask what effect has this pure love" left in their own lives? Read Prophet Muhammad's life. He spent many a sleepless night in reciting the prayers of his Lord, with tearful eyes and a trembling heart. Is this the true picture of love or the one with mere words? When Christ (Peace be upon him) was put on the cross, according to the Christian faith, he said 'O my God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?" When Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) is on his deathbed, breathing his last, he is heard saying, "O my God my dearest companion." Which of these two utterances brims of a sublime love, a taste of true bond between God and his devoted servant, and of spiritual serenity?

O Allah! Send Your special Blessings and Peace on him and on all the Prophets and Messengers.

Lecture 7. The Message of the Holy Prophet of Islam

Gentlemen! In my previous six lectures I have trIed to prove in the light of sound, and authentic arguments that of all the great men who have served humanity, only the Prophets of Allah are the ones whose noble examples ought to be followed And the most perfect and complete life available to us today is that of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) which makes him the best and eternal role model for all mankind. Once we have shown that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the eternal and perfect model the question arises— what are his universal teachings that lead to eternal success? What message has he brought to the world and what are the essential features of that message for which the last of God's Messengers was sent to this world? How did this Message modify & and complete the messages sent down through the earlier Prophets?
Admittedly, Divine messages have been sent down to this world from time to time through many Prophet's of Allah and we have shown in the light of historical evidence that all those Messages were meant for a particular period of time and for a particular people. Since they were for a limited time, they were not protected and with the passage of time their original form was lost. While attempts were made in some cases to compile them, human interference changed them. Their translations gave them a different shape altogether, particularly when the original had been lost and no historical evidence remained to prove its authenticity. Many imitations were added to the original divine message and all this was done over a few hundred years. But there is wisdom in all acts of Allah, therefore the disappearance of such Messages or the loss of their original shape is in itself a proof that those Books and Commandments were meant for a temporary period only. However, His Message that was sent down through His last Prophet was meant for all times and all places. As a result, it has remained intact and will remain so, because no Message is going to come after it. Almighty Allah has not said about any of His previous messages that they were final, or that He is Himself going to protect them. The very disappearance of those Divine revelations proves that they were meant to be temporary. In the heavenly books that exist today, not a single verse indicates that this book is complete and final and that it will be preserved, with the exception of the holy Quran. On the other hand, there are indications in their text that they are temporary and there is more of the Divine guidance still to come.
Moses (Peace be upon him) says in Torah: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall harken." (Duet 18:15) .

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words n his mouth and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut 18:19)

This is the Blessing that Moses, the servant of God, gave to the children of Israel before his death: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them He shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of Saints, from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

These verses from Torah clearly indicate that another Prophet like Moses is about to come with a "fiery law", and God will put His "words in his mouth." It is obvious, thus, that the Message given to Moses was not final and eternal.

Another Prophet of Allah, Isaiah gives the good tidings of a Messenger whose law will extend to lands of rivers and islands. Malachi says, "Look. I will send my Messenger." The other books of the Old Testament confirm the coming of future Prophets. It proves that none of the Jewish scriptures was meant to be complete, final and eternal.

The New Testament says: "... And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.."

But the Comforter, which is the holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, what ever I have said to you."

"I have many other things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of Truth, has come, he will guide you to all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

These verses of the Bible clearly indicate that it is not the last word of God, nor is it complete. Another Messenger of God is due to come who will complete the message of Christ. On the other hand, the Message brought by Prophet Muhammad does not tell of any other Messenger who is to follow and will bring a new message with him; or that there is some thing missing in his message that he will complete and thus make his message perfect. Prophet Muhammad's Message claims its own completion and perfection. A verse of the holy Quran states:

Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as Dīn (religion and a way of life) for you. (Chp.5:Vrs.3)

and it proclaims that Prophet Muhammad is the last of the chain of Allah's Prophets (Peace be upon them). To us the Quranic term that he is the 'Seal of Prophets," means he is the last Prophet. In many of his sayings the holy Prophet himself has said:

"The coming of Prophets has ceased after me." -

"Lo! There is no Prophet after me!"
"I have completed the Prophethood like the laying of the last brick completes a structure."
Not a single verse of the holy Quran indicates the coming of a future Prophet. This very fact makes it clear that the Divine Message that has been sent through Prophet Muhammad is the final Message of Allah to humanity, and that it is meant to last forever. Allah has taken upon Himself to preserve it with the promise,

"We verily are its Guardian."

My friends! The next question to consider, then, is: 'Was there any Divine Message other than the one sent through Prophet Muhammad that was Universal and applicable in all times?" For the Children of Israel the only world is their own world. The only God is the God of the Children of Israel. Therefore, none of their prophets nor any of their holy books has ever conveyed the Divine message to the non-Jews. Even today the Jewish religion and the Law of Moses are meant for the Jews alone. All Jewish scriptures are addressed only to the Jews and they are always asked to turn to their hereditry God. According to the Bible, Christ limited his message to the 'lost sheep of the Children of Israel and did not like to give "the Children's food to the dogs" by conveying his message to the non-Israelites. The ancient Indian, Vedas are not meant for the ears of non-Aryans because they considered the whole world inferior to their race. The books make it sure that the words of Vedas must not reach the inferior ears of the non-Aryans, and if they did so by any chance, those ears should be filled with molten lead.
Prophet Muhammad's message is the first and the last Message of God which is addressed to all, to the Arabs and the non-Arabs, to the Whites and the Blacks, to the Turks and the Tartars, to the Indians and the Chinese and to the Africans and the Westerners. In this message, Allah is the only God and just as He is the Lord of the Worlds (Praise be to Allah) the Lord of the Worlds), His Messenger too, has been sent to the whole world (he is called 'Mercy to the whole world") and his message is the univasal message. To quote a few verses of the holy Quran:

"It is nothing but an advice for all the worlds."(Chp.6:Vrs.90)

Glorious is the One who has revealed the Criterion to His servant, so that he may be a warner to all the worlds
the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, … (Chp.25:Vrs.1-2)

Prophet Muhammad came as a warner to all nations. His message extends to the whole of Allah's dominion. Another verse of the holy Book states:

Say, "O people, I am a messenger of Allah (sent) to you from the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth…." (Chp.7:Vrs.158)

The following verse too, confirms the universal nature of Prophet Muhammad's Message. It reaches out to everyone:

Say, "Allah is the witness between me and you, and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you, and whomsoever it may reach…." (Chp.6:Vrs. 19)

O prophet, We have sent you as a witness and as a bearer of good news and a warner, (Chp33:Vrs.45)

The above references fully demonstrate that of all the heavenly religions only Islam has proclaimed to be the final, complete, eternal and universal religion from God. It has been quoted in Muslim (the most authentic book of traditions after Al-Bukhari) that the holy Prophet said, "before me all prophets were sent to their own particular nations and I have been sent to all nations." This is a further proof of our contention and the solid evidence of history truely confirms our point that just as Prophet Muhammad's message is complete and universal, so is his character and personality a perfect and universal model.

Now the question arises what that universal message is which completed and superceded all religions and gave a perfect and lasting form to the Divine religion concluding Allah's favour on mankind.

Every religion has two aspects to it: one that concerns the human heart, and the other that is related to the physical side of human personality, its possessions and property etc. The first may be called faith while the other may be called acts or deeds. Human deeds can be classified into three main streams. The first one includes man's relation with Allah and its manifestion in various modes of worship. The second includes all kinds of dealings amongst human beings a major part of which is the law. The third includes; interrelations, governed by moral principles. Thus the four major components of a religion are: (1) belief or faith, (2) worship, (3) business deals, (4) morals. These four fundamental principles have come to their perfection through Prophet Muhammad's divine message.
In contrast, the Torah and the New Testament are ambiguous and absolutely unclear about faith or belief. There is some mentioning of the presence of God or

sometimes unity of God but without any evidence or sound argument. The attributes of God that can really nourish the human soul, and their knowledge can lead to an understanding and love of God, are missing. Next to the faith in the Oneness of God comes the faith in His Prophets; the nature of Prophethood; divine revelation and inspiration; communication with God; the explanation of certain basic facts such as the holy Prophets of God being human but infallible in their conveying of God's Message; their being sent to all nations at different times of human history; their holy mission and duties; their status among the human beings and how they ought to be regarded and recognized. Facts like these are hardly mentioned in the holy books of any religion before Islam. The accountability of man, Heaven and Hell, The Day of Judgment and the life in the Hereafter are mentioned in a few sentences in reply to a Jew's question in the Bible. On such vital issues the Bible contains just a few sentences. Similarly, Heaven and Hell are mentioned in a sentence or two. But Prophet Muhammad's message deals with all these matters clearly and in great detail. The idea of angels is mentioned in Torah but it is so vague that sometimes t is difficult to distinguish between the angels and God. In the Bible one or two angels are mentioned but the entity mentioned as the Holy Ghost is so mystifying that it can be taken as angel or God. However, in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) there is a very clear definition of angels, their function, their status, the various duties that they have been assigned, and their relation to Allah and His Messengers and other creatures of the universe is thoroughly explained. Prophet Muhammad's Message not only perfects the idea of faith and belief with respect to God and the Unknown it also clearly defines the practical aspect of human life. Let us consider the most important feature of human actions i.e. the mode of worship. There is a long discussion in the Old Testament regarding sacrificial rites. In addition, there is fasting and supplications. "Baitullah" or the House of God is named, too. But, all these things are so vague that most people fail to take any notice of them and usually ignore them or even deny them. The rites of worship are not clearly defined nor classified, neither is there any clear instruction on how to perform them. No time has been fixed for their performance. There are no particular supplications or rememberance of God taught in a regular manner. There are plenty of hymns and sacred songs in the Book of Psalms in the Bible. Yet, there is no mention of a proper way of worship, its timing and other guidelines. The other books of the Bible hardly ever mention any worship. It does mention Christ's starving for forty days which could be called fasting. The Jews' objection to Jesus (Peace be upon him) "Why don't your disciples fast?" is mentioned in the Bible itself. Apart from that, Christ's prayer is mentioned on the eve of the Crucifixion and he is reported to have taught his

disciples a prayer. However, it is not possible to extract from the Bible any subscribed methods of worship.

Compare all this to the teaching of Islam Here you will find everything clearly defined and in full detail. Clear and complete instructions are avail able for Salat (the five time prayer), for fasting, for Hajj (the Pilgrimage to Makkah), etc. The manners and conditions for performing these and other Islamic rites have been fully described, such as the prescribed times for the daily prayers, the times for keeping and breaking the fast, the time for the performance of Hajj. In addition, special prayers and supplications, the remembrance and glorification of Almighty Allah, how to turn to Him in all kinds of needs, how to ask His forgiveness, confession of sins and seeking His pardon and mercy—all these have been taught in a very simple and attractive manner so that the bond of worship and love is established between Allah and His servants. These teachings provide nourishment for the soul of man, uplifting him and uniting him with his Creator and Sustainer, They are the embodiment of the spirit of religion.
Another aspect of human actions is their mutual dealings and the rules of government. This part of human endeavor has been dealt with in detail in the message of Prophet Moses (Peace be upon him). These laws have been retained to a great extent in Prophet Muhammad's Shari'ah (Divine laws revealed to him). However, they are not as severe, and they have been raised from a narrow national sphere to an all embracing universal level. As their new status required some changes, new components have been added which were lacking in the old laws. For instance, there were no laws regarding divorce and its related matters except one or two rules in the Bible. However, a universal code of life like Islam needed to provide complete guidance in government and social affairs. Christ's message did not include these, so the Christian nations had to borrow from the laws of the pagan Greeks and Romans. In Prophet Muhammad's message, the Divine laws completly cover every aspect of the social and political needs of a civilized society and lay down fundamental principles which have ever since enabled the Muslim scholars to find out viable solutions to all kinds of problems and varying human needs over hundreds of years. Islam has dominated the world for over a thousand years and it has established numerous civilized and stable governments in all parts of the world. All these governments successfully applied and followed the Islamic law. This world has yet to present a better system.
The third aspect of human conduct is their moral behaviour. In the Torah we find some guidelines regarding morality consisting of seven fundamental principles—one is of positive nature like obeying the parents and the rest are negative like: "don't commit murder, theft, and adultery; don't give false evidence against your neighbour; don't covet your neighbour's wife, or his wealth." In the Bible, more or

less the same commandments have been repeated with the instruction to love others in a general sort of way. This may be regarded as an improvement on what is found in Torah. But the final Divine Message of the holy Quran has turned this drop into a full flowing river. First, it determines the twelve fundamental principles, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) during his ascent to the Heavens. They are mentioned in the Quranic chapter called Isra. Of these, one is concerned with the faith in the Oneness of God and the rest deal with human morals. They are a combination of do's and don'ts.

The do's are: Obey your parents. Fulfil your obligations to others. Treat the orphans with kindness. Give the correct measure and weight; Keep your promise as you will have to give an account of your deeds.

The don'ts include; do not kill your offspring for fear of poverty. Do not commit murder. Do not even go near adultery. Do not follow blindly an unknown path. Do not be vain. Do not be extravagant, but follow a middle path.

A comparative look at these fundamental principles clearly indicates that Prophet Muhammad's message is a continuation and completion of the Divine Message given to Christ and, before him, to Moses (Peace be upon them). These moral principles explain the complexities of ethical values and show how human potential can be fully realized. They also expose the weaknesses of human beings, diagnose every sickness of their soul, and provide its cure. That was how the perfection of human personality came about through the Message of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

Islamic teachings can be summed up in two words; Faith and Practice. Faith in Allah and righteous deeds dominate overwhelmingly Prophet Muhammad's message. The holy Quran clearly indicates that human salvation entirely depends on these two fundamental principles. It demands from us a pure and firm faith accompanied by pure and decent deeds. Verses like "Those who believe and do good deeds" are repeated scores of times in the holy Quran and it is made absolutely clear that our eternal success depends on nothing but true faith and good deeds. I would have liked to explain this point further with greater details but unfortunately it is not possible to treat this subject in full detail on this occasion. Therefore, I would prefer to emphasize only those aspects of the holy Prophet's message that particularly deal with humanity's misconception of these two basic principles of faith and practice and how his message corrects those mistakes and shows them a perfect way of life through Divine guidance. These misconceptions have led and continue to lead a major part of humanity away from their Creator and Sustainer, and have thrown them into the pit of ignorance and decadence. These mistakes are the root cause of the corruption of the human soul and condemn it to its eternal doom.

The first of those issues, made clear by Prophet Muhammad's Message, is to determine the status of humanity in the whole universe, particularly in relation to other creatures of Allah, and this very principle is the root of the Muslim article of faith i.e. the Oneness of God. Before Islam, man used to regard himself inferior to most creatures of Allah. He was awed by objects and creatures of nature such as a hard rock, a high mountain, a flowing river or a green tree, pouring rain or burning fire, fearsome jungles, poisonous snakes or roaring lions. He revered the milk-giving cow, the brilliant sun and the shining stars. Dark nights and weird forms would strike terror in his heart. In short, he would bow his head and worship anything that could either harm him or benefit him. But Allah's Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) brought him this message: "O people! These things are not your masters, rather you are their masters. You have not been created for their sake. They have been created to serve you. They are at your service, so why do you bow to them in worship? O Men! You are Allah's viceroy and deputy in the universe. Therefore every thing in it has been put at your disposal. The universe is at your command. You have not been created for its sake." In the words of the holy Quran:

(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a deputy on the earth…" (Chp 2: Vrs 30)

That is what has given Adam (Peace be upon him) and his sons the most dignified position in Allah's creation. Allah says in the holy Quran

"And We bestowed dignity on the children of 'Ādam…" (Chp 17: Vrs 70)

Is it then becoming of man to bow to other inferior creatures of Allah? Islamic teachings tell human beings that the whole world has been created for their use.

Let's consider a few verses of holy Quran at this juncture:

It is He who created for you all that the earth contains; (Chp.2:Vrs.29)

He has created cattle in which there is warmth and other benefits for you; and from them you have food; (Chp. 16: Vrs. 5)

He is the One who sent down water from the heavens, of which you have your drink; and with it (you grow) plants on which you pasture your cattle.
He causes the crops therewith to grow for you, and olives, and date palms, and grape vines, and all the fruits. Surely, in that, there is a sign for a people who ponder.

He has subjugated for you the day and the night and the sun and the moon, and the stars (too) are subservient by His command. Surely, in that, there are signs for a people who understand. (Chp. 16:Vrs. 10-12)

He is the One who has subjugated the sea, so that you may eat fresh meat from it, and may take out from it ornaments you wear, and you see the boats cleaving through it, and so that you may seek His bounty, and that you may be grateful. (Chp. 16:Vrs. 14)

It is He who made you the vicegerents of the earth and raised some of you in ranks over others (Chp.6:Vrs. 165)

Did you not see that Allah has subjugated to you everything on the earth, (Chp.22:Vrs.65)

There are numerous verses of the holy Quran that tell and teach this theme. The great Persian poet of Shiraz, Sa'di, expresses the same idea in a couplet when he says that the cloud, the wind, the moon, the sun and the heavens are all at work so that you may get your daily bread, and eat it gratefully (not being unmindful of your Creator's bounties).

The above quoted verses of the holy Quran make the Prophet's message very clear that man holds the central position in the universe; he is Allah's deputy on earth; he is the basic theme of all creation. He has been honored thus in Allah's word:

"And We bestowed dignity on the children of 'Ādam…" (Chp 17: Vrs 70)

Having known his position in the universe, is it becoming of man to serve lesser created beings and bow his head in reverence to others?
Men, in their ignorance, have often raised some of their own kings to the status of God, sometimes in the holy garb of incarnation and sometimes in the form of mighty tyrants. Be it a Pharaoh or a Nimrod, a bishop or a Pope, an ascetic or a saint, it is an insult to humanity to become a slave of their own kind. Prophet Muhammad's message strikes at the very root of this evil. In the words of holy Quran:

We shall never invoke any god other than Him, (Chp. 18: Vrs. 14)

Even the Prophet's are not allowed to ask people for the kind of obedience that is reserved for Allah. A Prophet cannot say: Be ye my worshippers; Rather than God's.

The greatest among the created beings that we can see are the Prophets, and then those that belong to the unseen world are His Angels. Even they do not have the right to be worshipped by man:

It is not (possible) for a man that Allah gives him the Book, the wisdom and the prophethood, then he starts saying to the people "Become my worshippers, aside from Allah" rather, (he would say), "Be men of the Lord; as you have been teaching the Book, and as you have been learning it."(Chp.3:Vrs.79)

Nor is it (possible for him) that he bids you to hold the angels and the prophets as Lords. (Chp. 3:Vrs.80)

He is the One who is God to be worshipped in the sky, and God to be worshipped on the earth. And He is the Wise, the All-Knowing (Chp43:Vrs.84)

To Him alone belong the creation and the command. (Chp.7:Vrs.54)

The Decision belongs to none but Allah. He relates the Truth and He is the best of all judges. (Chp.6:Vrs.57)

we worship none but Allah, that we associate nothing with Him and that some of us do not take others as Lords instead of Allah. (Chp.3:Vrs.64)

the One to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and who did neither have a son, nor is there any partner to him in the Kingdom, and who has created everything and designed it in a perfect measure. (Chp. 25:Vrs.2)

Keep in mind these verses of the Divine Message and it will be revealed to you that not only has it raised the position of humanity to the highest degree among the created beings, it has made the Oneness of God extremely clear and easy to understand. There is no "Caesar" beside Allah. Every thing belongs to Allah, nothing to Caesar. His power is absolute. His command extends to everything big or small in the Universe. All glory belongs to Him alone.

In short, Prophet Muhammad's message from Allah has raised the status of humanity to a point where a humanbeing can bow to no one but Allah, and they cannot humiliate themselves by seeking help from anyone except Allah. His power extends to everything, great or small. If He decides to take from someone, there is no power that can give them anything, and if He decides to give, no one is there to stop Him.

My dear friends! Tell me solemnly and sincerely. Can man ever worship and adore anyone other than Allah while he has been chosen to be His deputy on earth? Be it the light of day or the darkness of night, the air or the water, the king or the

enemy, the forests or the hills, the rivers or the deserts, can a true believer's heart turn to anything but Allah? Absolutely nothing can overawe a believer in God. Look at this exalted message of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and think of the moral power of his spiritual teachings.

Another fundamental principle of his teachings is that a man is primarily innocent and pure in his creation. Deep down in his nature he is simple and untainted by any sin. His own willful deeds make him a devil or an angel. By his own choice he can become a sinner or a saint. He himself blackens and brightens his basically pure nature. That is the greatest piece of good news that could be given to a human being and it has come through Allah's Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

The wide spread religions of China, India, Burma and even some of the Greek philosophers believe in re-incarnation. According to this belief man keeps appearing in this world in different cycles, and each phase is predetermined by his deeds, good or bad, in the previous cycle. This baseless faith leaves human being hopeless. Human life becomes a mere burden, because it leaves human beings chained by the consequences of imaginary sins they are supposed to have committed in a previous life. It leaves them with no free will, no choice. According to this faith man is a mere tool of a predetemfmed faith and his very re-birth is a sign of his being sinful. Even Christianity does not lighten this burden. It has rather increased it, because according to Christian teachings every human being is originally a sinner because they have inherited their father Adam's sin even though they may not have committed any sin at all. Therefore, they need someone free from the original sin, someone not from their own race to sacrifice himself and atone for all sins of the human beings.

But Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) came as a messenger of God and gave the glad tidings to the suffering humanity that they were not just tools of a predetermined faith. They were not haunted by any sins they had not themselves committed. They were born in a pure, sinless state, untainted by any original sin. They themselves had the choice to be clean and taint, pure or sinful and dirty by their own deeds. In the words of Allah:

I swear by the Fig and the Olive,
and by Tūr, the mount of Sinai,
and by this peaceful city,
We have created man in the best composition,
then We turned him into the lowest of the low,
except those who believed and did righteous deeds, because for them there is a reward never ending. (Chp.95:Vrs. 1-6)

Man has been given these good tidings through Allah's Prophet, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) that he has been created with the best and purest nature. He has been given the most balanced state of creation. If he does not use his discretion and do good deeds, he can fall lower than the beasts because of his bad deeds. In another chapter of holy Quran Allah says:

and by the soul, and the One who made it well,
then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety,
success is really attained by him who purifies it,
and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it (Chp.91:Vrs.7-10)

There cannot be greater evidence and a clearer message in favour of basic human nature. In another chapter of the holy Quran, Al-Dahr, it is stated:

We have created man from a mixed sperm-drop to put him to a test; then We made him able to hear, able to see.
We have shown him the way to be either grateful or ungrateful. (Chp.76:Vrs.2-3)

And in a Surah called "Al-Infitar";

O man! What has deceived you about your Gracious Lord,
who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion?
He composed you in whichever form He willed. (Chp.82:Vrs.6-8)

In the inspired language of the holy Prophet's Message, the word Deen (A way of life and faith in Allah) and the word nature are synonymous. They are two words, but have the same meaning, the same significance.
All true nature is Deen, the way Allah wants his creation to follow, the Way of submission and obedience to the Creator. Man's sins or the disease of disobedience came from outside attacking and spoiling the purity of his true nature. The holy Quran says:

So, set your face to the Faith uprightly, this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight faith, but most of the people do not know. (Chp.30:Vrs.30)

The Prophet of Islam has fully explained this verse of the holy Quran in one of his sayings (quoted in the authentic book of his sayings, Al Bukhari). According to this saying every baby is born with untainted nature, with a pure soul. But it is the parents who make him a Jew, a Christian or a worshipper of fire. Even a beast normally gives birth to fully developed offspring with no deformity. Then the holy

Prophet (Peace be upon him) quoted the above mentioned verse of the holy Quran.
We ought to see how miraculously the holy Prophet's message liberates mankind from the eternal burden of the original sin, and reassures them of the essential goodness of the human soul.
Before Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the world was divided into different clans who hardly knew one another. In India, the holy men of Hinduism had confined their religion to their own sacred law. Their God was concerned with the welfare of their followers only. Its benefits were meant for the people of the land, particularly for certain families of a higher caste. Zoroaster heard the message of God, but only for the people of the holy land of Persia. The Children of Israel believed that no prophet would ever come from outside their own tribes. It is the Prophet of Islam who has brought the Divine Message for the whole mankind. His message is not limited to the East or the West. The Divine Guidance, sent down through him is not meant just for one country, or one nation or one language. In its sight, Palestine, Persia, India or Arabia have the same status. It was meant to enlighten all mankind. Therefore, its light has spread throughout the world. In the words of Allah

there was no community without a warner having passed among them. (Chp.35:Vrs.24)

For every people there is a messenger. (Chp.10:Vrs.47)

We had indeed sent before you messengers to their people. (Chp.30:Vrs.47)

A Jew does not recognize any prophet of non-Jewish origin. It is not required of a Christian to believe in the Jewish prophets or prophets from other nations. This does not stop him from being a true Christian. Believers in Hinduism do not believe in any voice of God, coming from outside India. A follower of Zoroaster sees darkness everywhere except in Persia. But it is Prophet Muhammad's message which proclaims that all mankind belongs to Allah. He alone is their Creator. As His creation the whole human race is entitled to share His bounties. The Light of His guidance was sent down for every place inhabited by human beings. Be it Persia or India, Greece or China, Arabia or Syria, His Prophets were sent to them and through their teachings they received Allah's Commandments. As a result of Islamic teachings every Muslim knows that he cannot become a true believer i.e. Muslim unless he believes in all the Prophets, all heavenly books, and all Divine revelation that came before Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Those prophets who have been mentioned by name in the holy Quran, and those whose names have not been given by the holy Quran (whatever their

names and their countries) are to be believed as true prophets of Allah. Who are Muslims? Look at the answers in the words of God:

and who believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you; (Chp.2:Vrs.4)

In the same Chapter of the holy Quran it is mentioned:

but righteousness is that one believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, (Chp.2:Vrs.177)

Towards the end of the Surah, the Revelation says that Prophet Muhammad and his followers:

The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and the believers as well. All have believed in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers. "We make no division between any of His Messengers," (Chp.2:Vrs.285)

That means they cannot say they believe in some prophets and do not believe in others All Muslims have the command:

O you who believe, do believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Book He has revealed to His Messenger and in the Books He has revealed earlier.... (Chp.4: Vrs. 136).

Dear friends! Can you find a parallel to these teachings of Prophet Muhammad? He teaches equality of souls, brotherly and mutual love of human beings, equal respect for all true religions, their leaders and Prophets, and true faith in all the messengers of Allah. His message of universal love, human sympathy and respect is all embracing. It reaches out to every single household wherever human beings live.

The followers of all religions, apart from Islam have established intermediaries between man and God. In the ancient temples there were the holy men and high priests. The Jews had taken Levi and his sons to be the intermediary between them and God, and only they could lead the service and perform other religious rites. The Christians had given some Disciples of Christ and their popes the same status, believing whatever they bind on earth would be bound in heaven and whatever they unbind here on earth would be unbound in heaven. They had been given the power to pardon the sins of all mankind. No service could be conducted without them. Like wise, among the Hindus the superior caste Brahmins believe they have been created out of the right hand of God. They

alone form the link between man and God. No Hindu religious ceremony can be held without them. But in Islam, there are no high priests, Brahmins or popes. There is no clergy here. There is no superior caste or class. Allah alone has the power to bind or unbind. Only Allah has the power to pardon the sins. There is no intermediary here between man and Allah. Any ordinary Muslim can be an Imam to lead the Prayers, sacrifice an animal, or conduct a marriage contract or perform all religious rites. Here is the common call to all men and women:

Your Lord has said, "Call Me, I will respond to you…" (Chp.40:Vrs.60)

Everyone can communicate with Him, seek His Mercy through their supplication, bow to Him and offer their prayers, show their love and devotion. There is no need for any intermediary between the Creator and His devotees. This was a great freedom granted to mankind by the way of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). This freedom liberates man from the tyranny of man in all matters between the slaves and their - Lord, the Creator and Sustainer. In Islam every man is his own high priest. He is not dependent on any priest, pope or Brahmin. Human history shows that they have always taken an extremist attitude towards the holy men of God who were ordained by Him, from time to time, to guide them to the right path. Their extreme devotion a reverence for them eventually took the form of worship. They were exalted to the status of God Himself, or God-incarnate or a manifestation of God. In the ancient temples of Babylon, Assyria and Egypt the high priests seem to have attained the glory of God. In Hinduism they are regarded as God-incarnate. The Buddhists and Jams considered their Buddha's and guides as gods. The Christians called their prophet the son of God. On the other extreme, the Israelites began to consider anybody a prophet of God who could foretell the future. In order to be a prophet all one needed to do was make predictions and prophecies. It was not even necessary for him to be a man of noble conduct. That is why the present holy books of the Jews contain highly obnoxious and pornographic stories about some well-known and great prophets of God.
Islam has given this great position of Prophethood its due respect and honour. It says that Allah's Prophets are not God, His likeness or God-incarnate. Nor is a Prophet, God's son or His relative. They are men and nothing but men. All prophets were human beings and when Allah's last Prophet declared that he was a man they would exclaim: "Can man be a God's Messenger?" Islam says. 'Yes'. The holy Quran says:

…Say, "I proclaim the Purity of my Lord. I am nothing but human, a messenger." (Chp.l7:Vrs.93)

In Allah's creation everything is under His command and control. His Prophets cannot interfere in the scheme of things of their own accord or their own power. Nor are they able to do anything superhuman of their own will. If they performed miracles, deeds beyond human power, it was with Allah's permission and His command.

However, they are not ordinary human beings. Their achievements and missions raise them to a higher status which is impossible for an ordinary mortal to achieve. They have been chosen to speak for Allah. They receive Divine Revelation. They are free from all sins. They are impeccable in their obedience and service to Allah so that they can show others the right way through their own perfect personal example. Allah shows His signs and miracles at their hands. They always call mankind to goodness and virtue. They are to be respected and obeyed by all. They are special, sincere and true bondsmen of Allah. He has chosen them and given them the exalted status of Prophethood whereby they receive Divine Instruction and pass it onto others.

This is the well balanced and just approach regarding all the Prophets and Apostles of Allah which has been taught by Islam. It is free from all kinds of extreme and unreasonable ideas about Prophethood, and befits the religion of Islam which has established the doctrine of Oneness of Allah in the world beyond any doubt.

My dear friends! Today's meeting has taken longer than expected but there is still a lot more to be said. God willing, I will continue my talk in our next meeting. A good part of the night is already over. Therefore, let us end today's meeting with our homage to the great Teacher and Benefactor of mankind, Allah's Prophet Muhammad. May Allah's Blessings and Peace be upon him.

Lecture 8. Practice Based on the Teachings of Prophet Muhammad

Dear friends! Today's talk marks the end of our month-long meetings. As you know, it is the eighth meeting of this series. I had intended to present to you at least the essential aspects of Islam in my last two speeches but it seems that a lot more time is needed to do justice to the subject. However, to sum up let us return to the basics of which the first principle is the Oneness of God.

All heavenly religions, before the coming of Prophet Muhanunad (Peace be upon him), had originally brought the message of the Oneness of God and called to His worship alone. Let us analyze the basic factors that caused the misunderstanding of this principle and subsequently led their followers to error. The first reason is giving God a physical likeness, a personification; the second, giving His attributes a separate and permanent entity; and the third that they were confused by the limitless manifestations of His Power of creation. Prophet Muhammad's Message removes the doubts and clears the misunderstandings and leaves no doubt about the purpose of man's creation and his relation to God and the universe created by Him.

Let's first consider the use of images to portray God and man's relation with God by the followers of earlier religions. They invented likenesses and similitudes for God. Very soon the idea of God disappeared and His likenesses or symbols took His place. Later, this imagery was given a concrete shape and idols began to be worshipped instead of God. One of Allah's attributes is affection and love for His creatures. Allah's Love and Mercy to His servants was personified in the image of a woman. Among the Aryans a woman symbolizes the tenderest of emotions, a mother's love for her child. Therefore, Allah's relation with mankind was shown as the goddess of love. So Allah's love was given the shape of the mother. In certain other Hindu sects this love was shown in images depicting a woman's love for her man. Devoted *'fakirs'* began to wear a sari and bracelets, to depict their devotion to God, like a devoted wife's love for her husband.

In the ancient Greek and Roman society God is seen as a female. The Semite nations considered it improper to talk about their women folk in public. With them the father is the head of the family. In the ancient ruins of Babylon and Assyria, God is shown as a male figure. The early vision of God with the Israelites is the father, and the angels and human beings are his offspring. Later, only the Children of Israel are considered to be God's children. In certain old scriptures of the Israelites the relation between God and mankind is shown like that of man and wife, to the extent that the Israelites and Jerusalem are regarded to be God's wives. Among the Christians the metaphor of father and son came literally to

mean father and son. The ancient Arabs had a similar attitude. Allah was considered to be the father while the angels were the daughters. However, Islam has dismissed all such ideas, similitudes, metaphors and idioms. It has declared in the clearest of terms that God is One and Only and:

Nothing is like Him. (Chp.42:Vrs. 11)

This one little verse has shaken all forms of polytheism to its root. A very short Surah of the holy Quran removes all misconceptions of man about God. According to the holy Book:

Say, "The truth is that Allah is One. [112:2] Allah is Besought of all, needing none. [112:3] He neither begot anyone, nor was he begotten. [112:4] And equal to Him has never been any one." (Chp.112; Vrs.1-4)

Through this shortest of surahs of the holy Quran emerges the purest and clearest concept of the Oneness of God. It leaves absolutely no chance for any form of polytheism to mar the Islamic Faith, based on the Oneness of Allah. However, this does not mean that Prophet Muhammad's Message has in any way weakened the bond that exists between the Most Mercifiul, Most Beneficent, and the Most Loving God and His servants. It has established the proper link between man and God. It has only removed the idolatry forms and physical likenesses which were the hurdles between man and God. Man's relation with Allah is a much purer, stronger, and higher relation than any he has known in this worldly life. Compared to it the relations between man and wife, or a father and son, or a daughter and mother are much inferior. Moreover, such similitudes or metaphors lead to an error in interpretation and consequently to polytheism and doubt. Therefore Islam says:

…Recite the name of Allah, as you would speak of your forefathers or even with greater fervor… (Chp.2:Vrs.200)

In this verse the likeness of the believers' love for Allah to that of their love to their fathers is mentioned, and the likeness of a son's relation with his father is avoided to explain his relation with Allah, which is on a more sublime level. No physical relationship can ever explain the bond between man and Allah. The holy Quran goes on to say that one's love for Allah should be greater than their love for their father:

…But those who believe are most firm in their love for Allah… (Chp.2; Vrs. 165)

This means that true believers reserve their greatest love for Allah. The holy Quran does not call Allah "the father of the worlds" it rather uses the Arabic words which are best translated as "The Cherisher and the Sustainer of the worlds." A father's relation with a son is temporary whereas Allah's relation with

His servants is sublime and eternal. Some Quranic words that are used to denote Allah's Love for His servants may be translated as a father's love for a son while others mean a mother's love and affection for her children. But Allah is neither a father nor a mother. He is Sublime, beyond the scope of these similitudes and physical likenesses. No worldly relationship can ever adequately explain the bond that exists between Allah and His servants.

Gentlemen! Another reason for the misconception about the Oneness of God in ancient religions is that they have understood God's attributes as separable. Separating His attributes from the Supreme Being, they have given them independent status and consider them different entities in their own right. This error is particularly evident in Hinduism where every attribute of God is a presence in itself, so instead of one God they have to recognize three hundred and thirty million gods and for each god they have found a solid image that represents a particular attribute. For instance, the power of God is represented through a powerful hand. The idol symbolizing God's power was shown to have several hands. God's wisdom has been shown through a statue with two heads and so on.

Followers of Hinduism have formed several sects. The reason being the same old concept of giving God's attributes separate and permanent entities and representing them through a solid form. God's three main attributes-- -His power to give life, His power to sustain life and His power to take life are three separate personifications in Hinduism. "Brahma", Vishnu" and "Shiva" are three separate beings, each one having their own followers grouped under three different sects: the Brahmins, the worshippers of Vishnu", and those of"Shiva". Another sect carved out the human sexual organs from stone and began to worship them because to them these organs manifest God's power of creation.

Likewise, the Christian concept of Trinity represents three separate attributes of God: Life, Knowledge and Will. Life is the Father, Knowledge the holy Ghost and Will the only begotten son of God. Similar concepts are found in the ancient Roman, Greek and Egyptian ideology. But Prophet Muhammad's Divine Message makes clear the human error which results from the self-deception of seeing one in many. It is merely man's ignorance that he should take One God's various attributes as separate entities and give them the status of God.

But the holy Quran says, "Praise be to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds. " "All attributes belong to Him." "Allah is the Light of Heavens and the Earth". His Attributes are various but the Christians of ancient Arabia, and the polytheists used the word Allah for God. The word Rahman" denotes the Grace of God, the attribute of Mercy that flows from God Most Gracious to all His creatures. The holy Quran says:

Say, "Call (Him by the name of) Allah or Ar-RaHmān, in whichever way you call, His are the Best Names." (Chp.17:Vrs.110)

Again in the Quranic words:

So, it is Allah who is the Patron, and He gives life to the dead, and He is Powerful to do every thing. (Chp.42:Vrs.9)

Undoubtedly, "He is most Forgiving, Most Merciful" Yet another verse of the Divine Revelation describes Him:

He is the One who is God to be worshipped in the sky, and God to be worshipped on the earth. And He is the Wise, the All-Knowing. (Chp.43: Vrs.84)

Another verse says:

…as a mercy from your Lord, "Surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing"
the Lord of the heavens and the earth and of whatever there is between them, if you are to believe.
There is no god, but He. He gives life and brings death. He is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. (Chp.44:Vrs.6-8)

He has all the attributes that you see separately in "Brahma" and "Shiva" and "Vishnu" (and consider them gods in their own right). But, the source is One and Only. The attributes are various belonging to the same One God. Therefore, according to the holy Quran:

So, to Allah belongs all praise, who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the worlds.
And to Him belongs majesty in the heavens and the earth. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Chp.45:Vrs.36-37)

The praises are many but the Praised one is the same, the Creator, the Cherisher, and the Sustainer of all beings. Consider the following verses of the holy Quran:

He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is All-Merciful, Very-Merciful.
He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Supreme-In-Holiness, the Safe (from all defects), the Giver-Of-Peace, the Guardian, the All-Mighty, the All-Repairer, the Sublime. Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him.
He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Shaper. His are the Most Beautiful Names. His purity is proclaimed by all that is in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (Chp.59:Vrs.22-24)

It is only through the Message of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) that we learn such sublime attributes of God. The others have split God into several deities by separating Him from His attributes. "**Pure is Allah from what they associate with Him."** refers to the polytheism committed by people who see God separate from His attributes. Prophet Muhammad's Message tells people that He is Allah, gives proper form and colour to things. He is the sovereign Lord of all beings. He is the Holy One, free from all evil. He gives faith, and He is the the Supreme Being; He is the Creator of all things. He is the Evolver, the Guardian of Faith: Only His Will prevails. There is absolutely no one who can oppose or resist Him. He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All these attributes belong to Him. He is One and Only.

Another factor that leads to polytheistic belief is the variety of Allah's acts. The human error lies in the belief that for each act of God there is a different god. If one gives life, the other takes life; one causes wars, the other brings peace. There is a god or goddess of love and a different one for enmity. There are deities for knowledge, wealth etc. running into hundreds, each one reserved for an act of his own. Islam's message for such people is that all acts are the acts of Allah, the One God.

All acts can be summed up under two main categories of good or evil.

The belief that both good and bad acts cannot come from one source led Zoroastrians to say that there were two gods: one for good and the other for evil. They were called *Yazdan* and *Ahruman* and this world was the battleground for the eternal conflict of the two. The Zoroastrians made this basic error because they could not understand the reality of good and evil. My friends! Evil and good in this world are relative terms. Nothing in itself is good or evil. It becomes good or evil according to the way it is used by human beings. Take the example of fire. Use it for cooking, running your engines or allow a poor person to warm himself, it will become good. Use the same fire to burn someone's house it will be evil. Fire in itself is neither evil nor good. You make it either evil or good by the way you use it. Similarly, the sword is neither evil nor good in itself. It is what you make it with your use. Similarly, there is darkness. If you rob people's houses under the cover of darkness, it is evil. If you do good deeds without showing off, it is good. It can also be a source of comfort for the tired human minds.

Allah has created the Universe, the Heavens and the Earth. He has created all matter. He has given things their particular properties and then He created man and gave him the faculties of mind and heart. He gave him the ability to think and understand the nature of things. When man looks at the order and perfection in the universe and discovers different properties of things, he marvels at the powers of Allah and cries out in awe and amazement. "So Blessed be God;

The Best to create." A man may say, like Allah's Prophet Abraham did (Peace be upon him):

"I have, indeed, turned my face straight towards the One who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not one of those who associate partners with Allah." (Chp.6:Vrs.79)

On the other hand, this material world with all its powers and properties and outwardly attractions and glamour may lead some people to a purely materialistic attitude. This kind of reasoning makes them deny the very presence of God. They believe that Matter and Time are the essence of the universe. According to a verse of the holy Quran;

And they say, "There is no life but our worldly life. We die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." They have no knowledge about that; they do nothing but make conjectures. (Chp.45:Vrs.24)

The universe, with all its wonders and glorious properties, is there for everyone to see. But people may form thousands of different ideas about it. A person may go deeper than the outward appearance of things and reach the Creator, Allah and begin to adore Him. Yet, another may draw a different conclusion and become agnostic, denying the very presence of God. A little consideration can reveal the fact that it is the one and the same thing that can show a person the light of guidance, or can lead him astray. The universe in itself does not show the right or the wrong path to man. It is his own mental attitude, his own choice that makes the difference. The universe is Allah's creation, and just as it can produce two different results in human beings, Allah's Message, sent down through His Prophets can influence people in different ways. After reading the holy Quran or the holy Bible a person may believe in Allah recognize Him and find peace while another may have doubts in his mind and he may deny it. The message is the same, the hearts are different. The believer's heart and the sceptic's heart have the same Creator. Though the Creator is one the created beings are many. However, the variety of acts does not mean that there are many doers. The truth is that in the universe we see a variety of creation but the Creator is One. He is the Master of both the good and the evil. In the words of the holy Quran:

"…By this He lets many go astray, and by this He makes many find guidance. But He does not let anyone go astray thereby except those who are sinful.
"Those who break the Covenant of Allah after it has been made binding, and cut off the relations Allah has commanded to be joined, and spread disorder on the earth - it is these who are the losers." (Chp.2:Vrs.26-27)

Allah does not give guidance to the people who disbelieve. (Chp.2:Vrs.264)

These verses clearly show that guidance and error are decided by Almighty Allah, but the responsibility of choice lies with the human beings. If you choose the path of disobedience to Allah, cause divisions among human beings, spread corruption in the world, deny the clear signs of Allah, only then are you condemned to go astray. It is your own choice of evil deeds that will end up in eternal condemnation.
Allah has created man and shown him his destiny. He has made clear the two ways: the one that leads to Heaven and the oththat leads to the depths of Hell:

We have shown him the way to be either grateful or ungrateful. (Chp76:Vrs.3)

He is the Creator of all things of this world too, be they good or bad. He says:

"This is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He…" (Chp40:Vrs.62)

"…while Allah has created you and what you make?" (Chp37:Vrs.96)

And

…"Our Lord is the One who gave everything its due shape, then guided it." (Chp20:Vrs.50)

Now the choice is yours. You can choose the right path, the path of good, or you may choose the path of error and evil. So it is your choice that actually makes things good or evil. The separation of good and evil does not mean there are two gods. Allah is one, the Creator of both good and evil.

… Is there any creator other than Allah who gives you provision from the sky and the earth? There is no god but He. So, to where are you being turned around (by your desires)? (Chp.35:Vrs.32)

Allah has sent down His message. Now it is up to you to believe it or not.

Then We conveyed the Book as an heritage to those of Our slaves whom We chose. Now, some of them are those who wrong their own selves, and some of them are mediocre, and some of them are those who outpace (others) in righteous deeds with Allah's permission. That is the great bounty, (Chp.35:Vrs.32)

Whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults). (Chp.42:Vrs.30)

Of the human soul, He says:

**then inspired it with its (instincts of) evil and piety,
success is really attained by him who purifies it,
and failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. (Chp.91:Vrs.8-10)**

Allah's worship is required in all heavenly religions, past or present. But in some religions it was wrongly understood that the aim of worship was to punish one's body. In other words, the greater the physical pain, the greater the spiritual refinement. That was their belief. The soul's progress depended on the amount of pain inflicted on the body. This concept of worship gave birth to monasticism among the Hindus and the Christians. It led to all kinds of great hardships and painful exercises in self-denial. For instance, someone vowed never to take a bath, or wear nothing but a mantle of coarse and rough cloth, or remain naked even in severe cold. Some of them vowed to remain standing all the time, others decided to remain in a cave forever, or keep standing in the sun all their life, or sit on a particular rock for their whole life. There were others who decided to live on free leaves only. Some thought the best way of worship was celibacy so they vowed to stay away from the opposite sex. One form of worship was to raise a hand and keep it there until it dried up. To some, worship meant holding their breath for as long as possible or hanging from a tree upside down. These were regarded as the highest forms of worship to God and the most advanced ways of spiritualism before Islam. Prophet Muhammad's message emancipated human beings from such practices and freed them from this jugglery in the name of spiritualism. It teaches them that Allah does not put a burden over human beings beyond their capacity. He likes to see the purity of heart, the inner beauty of the human soul rather than its outward form. The restrictions put down by Him are not too hard a burden for His servants. In the words of the holy Quran:

Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity… (Chp.2:Vrs.286)

Islam considers monasticism a human invention and says:

…As for monasticism, it was invented by them; We did not ordain it for them… (Chp.57:Vrs.27)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) declares in one of his traditions:
'There is no monasticism in Islam.'

The holy Quran puts this question to those who deny themselves the legitimate pleasures of life provided to them by Allah:

Say, "Who has prohibited the adornment Allah has brought forth for His servants… (Chp.7:Vrs.32)

Even the Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself got this warning from Allah when, on one occasion, he had vowed (in an angry mood) never to eat honey again:

O Prophet, why do you ban (on your self) something that Allah has made lawful for you… (Chp.66:Vrs.1)

Prophet Muhammad's Message clearly defines for the whole world the only purpose of worship. It means a complete surrender to Almighty Allah. Allah's servants must acknowledge their bondage and loyalty to their Lord.
Otherwise:

…Definitely those who show arrogance against worshipping Me shall enter Jahannam (Hell) with disgrace. (Chp.40:Vrs.60)

This means Allah's servants are never disobedient. This is the essence of worship and it manifests itself in different acts of a servant of Allah. By performing various acts of worship as prescribed by Allah, he shows his obedience to Him and confirms his bondage.
In Islam the only aim of worship, and its result, is to earn piety and purity. The holy Quran says:

O people, worship your Lord who created you and those before you, so that you may become God-fearing. (Chp.2:Vrs.21)

The five-time prescribed Prayer is the foremost form of worship. Its benefit in the words of Quran is:

…Surely Salāh restrains one from shameful and evil acts… (Chp.29:Vrs.45)

And the purpose of fasting is:

O you who believe, the fasts have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be God-fearing, (Chp.2:Vrs.183)

The purpose of Hajj (Pilgrimage) is:

so that they witness benefits for them, and recite Allah‘s name in specified days, over the provision He gave them from the cattle. “So, eat thereof and feed the distressed, the poor.” (Chp.22:Vrs28)

Zakat (the obligatory charity) is meant for the purification of heart and to help the needy:

Who gives his wealth (in charity) to become purified,
While no one has conferred any favour on him for which he would give a return,
But (he gave his wealth in charity) only to seek the Countenance of his Lord, the Most High. (Chp.92:Vrs.18-20)

Marriage is a holy practice of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) for the promotion of human race. He says: "Marriage is my way. And whoever deviates from my practice is not one of us." The holy Quran highly regards the family ties and considers wives and children a great source of joy (the light of one's eyes) to be coveted by Muslims. In the words of the holy Quran:

- And those who say, “Our Lord, Give us, from our spouses and our children, comfort of eyes, and make us heads of the God-fearing.” (Chp.25:Vrs.74)

Sacrificial rites were one of the many forms of worship in the past; people would sacrifice themselves for gods. They considered their children their personal property and felt free to sacrifice them. The idols were sprinkled with sacrificial blood. The flesh of the animals for sacrifice was burned with the belief that its smoke was the incense that pleased the gods. The Jews were known to burn the sacrificial flesh for this purpose. But the last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) explained the real purpose of sacrifice. His Message stopped and absolutely forbade human sacrifice. The sacrifice of animals is allowed but sprinkling their blood and burning their meat is forbidden. The holy Quran explains the purpose of animal sacrifice:

The big animals of sacrifice (like camels and cows) are made by Us among the symbols of Allah for you, in which there is much good for your benefit. So recite the name of Allah over them as they are lined up (for sacrifice). Then, once their flanks fall down (after slaughter), eat of them and feed the one who is content and the one who wishes to receive. Thus We have made them (the animals) subjugated to you, so that you may be grateful.
It is neither their flesh nor their blood that reaches Allah, but what does reach Him is the taqwā (the sense of obedience) on your part. Thus He has made them (the animals) subjugated to you, so that you proclaim Allah‘s glory for the guidance He gave you. And give good news to those who are good in their deeds. (Chp.22:Vrs.36-37)

The wrong concept of sacrifice had led people to believe that man has complete control over his life and he is the master of his own soul. Similarly, he owns the life of his children and that of his wife. This wrong belief resulted in many cruel practices. It gave birth to suicide, infanticide, sacrifice of little children or their killing, wife-burning after the death of her husband and many such inhuman customs. Prophet Muhammad's Message eradicated all such practices. It established the principle that human life is sacred, and it cannot be taken except by Allah's Command. Therefore, in Islam it is forbidden to eat the meat of those animals that are not slaughtered in the name of Allah. The doors of Heaven are closed on those who take their own life. Suicide is a great sin. In non-Islamic societies, particularly in Europe and America, suicide is considered the best solution to many problems. In these civilized societies, the law often fails to stop this practice, because every one feels free to take their own life in order to escape from the world's problems. They believe there is no life after death, or if there is, they will not be accountable to Allah for that. But, Islam says our life is not our own. It really belongs to Allah. It is a gift from Allah which cannot be thrown away. Suicide is not the right idea for getting rid of life's problem, because this act would cause unimaginable suffering in the life hereafter. There are many verses in the holy Quran about the sanctity of life. About suicide the Quranic verdict is:

Do not kill any person the life of whom is sanctified by Allah, except for a just reason… (Chp.17:Vrs.33)

**…Do not kill one another. Indeed, Allah has been Very-Merciful to you.
Whoever does that out of aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire… (Chp.4:Vrs.29-30)**

Among the Arabs, before Islam, killing of little girls was a common practice. It was also common among the Rajputs of India, and in other parts of the world. The ancient Arabs were so ruthless that they used to bury their daughters alive. One verse from the holy Prophet's Message put an end to this evil custom forever.

**And when the girl-child that was buried alive will be asked,
For what sin she was killed, (Chp.81:Vrs.8-9)**

It was not a crime to kill children in pre-Islamic Arabia. Even in today's civilized world many children are killed for lack of means to bring them up. It is proposed that the population should be controlled because a certain country is poor. In ancient Arabia and some other countries abortion was not illegal. In ancient

Greece, new born babies were examined and the weaklings were not considered fit to live. They were thrown off the top of a mountain to be killed. In the modern world, almost the same thing is being done in the name of birth control. However, Islam tells people that no one sustains the living beings but Allah. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. According to the holy Quran:

There is no creature on earth whose sustenance is not undertaken by Allah… (Chp.11:Vrs.6)

And it says:

Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide sustenance to them and to you, too. Killing them is a great sin indeed. (Chp.11:Vrs.6)

In those parts of the world where Prophet Muhammad's Message has not been accepted, one of the greatest wrongs is that human beings have been divided into different classes and communities on the basis of colour, race and wealth. Since the ancient times, the Indian Hindus have regarded everyone but themselves dirty and impure. They classify themselves into four castes, each one having different rights and privileges. The lowest class, known as Shudars, does not have the same rights as others, even in worshipping God. They are treated less than human in worldly matters too. The ancient Iran maintained the similar four classes. The Romans regarded themselves as the masters with the rest of the world fit only to be their subjects. The Jews were the only chosen people of God and the non-Jews were Gentiles. Even among themselves they had different classes. How about the modern, civilized Western nations of today? Today's Europe that claims to be the champion of freedom and culture, considers the white race superior to others and is reluctant to give equal treatment to coloured races. While travelling, the Asians cannot sit along with them. In certain countries they cannot live together in the same neighbourhood. They do not have equal rights. Many American humanists would not give the Negroes even the right to live. In South and East Africa, African Indians and Asians do not enjoy the basic human rights of freedom and equality. This discrimination has entered even the house of God. The whites and the blacks have separate churches because they cannot bow their heads together to one God. Prophet Muhammad's Message puts an end to all kinds of discrimination. In Islam the distinction based on ancestry, wealth or appearance is meaningless. The Qureish of Makkah, were particularly proud of their noble ancestry. On the occasion of his triumphant return to Makkah the holy Prophet (Peace he upon him), addressed them in the holy Mosque:

"O Qureish! Allah has put an end to all arrogant customs of your ignorant past. Your sense of superiority to others because of your ancestors means nothing in the sight of Allah. All human beings have descended from Adam, and Adam was created from clay"
On the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage he announced:
"No preference is to be given to an Arab over a non-Arab. Nor is a non-Arab preferable to an Arab. You are all descendants of Adam and Adam was created from clay."
He then added that the only distinction was that of piety;
"Allah has put an end to your false sense of ancestral pride and arrogance of the past. Man's fate depends on his deeds, good or bad. All men have descended from Adam who was created from clay"
And in the words of the Divine Revelation, the holy Quran:

O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify one another. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah's sight, is the one who is most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Chp.49:Vrs.13)

Another verse of the holy Quran says:

Your riches or your children are not the things that bring you near Us closely; however, the one who believes and acts righteously (is close to Us). Therefore, such people will have the double reward for what they did, and they will be at peace in the upper chambers (of Paradise). (Chp.34:Vrs.37)

Islam calls for the universal brotherhood of man. The Muslims were given this message in the holy Quran; "The Believers are but, A single Brotherhood' And the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) declared on the occasion of his last pilgrimage: "A Muslim is a Muslim's brother." This brotherhood and equality removes the difference that divides mankind and brings the Black and the White the non-Arab and the Arab, The Turk and the Tartar, the Negro and the European together. Allah mentions His particular favour to the believers in the holy Quran that through faith in Him they have become like brothers. In the sight of Allah all are equal. There is no distinction of ancestry, wealth or poverty; of the nobility of the Brahmin or the lowliness of the Shudar. The holy Quran is meant for all. Everybody can lead a prayer congregation. Anyone can ask a girl's hand in marriage. All have the right to acquire knowledge. All have equal rights. All are equal before the law. 'Life for Life" is the Divine Law. All are equal in the sight of Allah.

My dear young men! It was my wish to count in front of you the many blessings of Allah's Prophet Muhammad's Message, but unfortunately there is not enough time, and there is no limit to Allah's blessings and favours to mankind. I would particularly have liked to mention in greater detail the rights of women and the slaves that Islam has given to them. The West, with all its lofty claims, falls short of what Islam gives to these most exploited and wronged members of human society.

One single factor that has misguided the world is the separation of the spiritual affairs from the worldly affairs. Religion is considered separately from the day to day worldly practice. Worldly success is considered one thing and spiritual success something else. This division is caused by supposing separate allegiance to God and "Caesar", as if God had left people free to do whatever they pleased in their worldly affairs. This was the greatest mistake that spread in the world in the name of religion. This error was exposed with the coming of the light brought by Prophet Muhammad's Message which said that religion was a complete system of guidance sent down by God through His Prophets. The Last Message is a complete code of life. Applying it in all walks of life means true religion. Piety or righteousness does not mean meditating in the cave of a mountain. But following sincerely Allah's Guidance in our day to day affairs can lead us to great spiritual heights. Looking after one's friends, children, parents, countrymen etc., earning a decent living are not purely worldly affairs from an Islamic point of view. But indulging in all these things within the limits provided by the Divine Guidance is real piety.

In Islam salvation and eternal success in the Hereafter depends on two things: Faith and Practice. Faith requires an unfailing belief in Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; in all the Prophets who bring Allah's Message to Mankind; in angels who bring Allah's Message to the prophets; in heavenly books that contain Allah's Message; in reckoning when people will give an account of their deeds whether they were according to the Message sent down by Allah. Practice is based on these five factors which form the basis of Iman or Faith. Without this Faith it is not possible to do any good deeds sincerely and piously. Good deeds, as I have mentioned in my previous talk, can be summed up in three main categories:

(1) Acts of worship which demonstrate the Greatness of Allah and man's humility towards Him.

(2) Business and social deals in which economic and social life is organized and established on fair and just principles. Fair deal replaces cheating and exploitation. Thus human society is saved from destruction and chaos.

(3) Morality which means those mutual rights and obligations which are not legally binding but without which it is not possible to attain any social progress or spiritual excellence.
So these four things—faith, worship, business and social deals, and good morals—are the essential means to our success in this world and the Hereafter.
Dear young men! Let me say in all sincerity and frankness that Islam is not apathy, complacency, a selfish and individual passive attitude towards life. In reality Islam is a constant involvement and struggle to overcome evil, within and outside man. It is action and movement and progress. It is not death. It is life.
Allah says in His holy Book:

and that a man shall not deserve but (the reward of) his own effort, (Chp.53:Vrs.39)

Another verse says:

Everyone will be detained (in the Hell) because of what he did, (Chp.74:Vrs38)

Islam is a total strife. It is not passive self-denial in a monastery. It challenges the problems of life in the open. The life of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be upon him) is a clear example. The life of his worthy companions, his four deputies in particular, and others in general, is a noble example in human history. Their lives are perfect models to attain salvation and all round success. The way of life they followed points to constant progress and everlasting happiness. Prophet Muhammad's Message, unlike that of Budha and Christ, does not demand giving up all our desires. It simply demands a control and restraint over our desires. Unlike the Christian attitude, it does not hold in contempt the acquiring of wealth and power. Rather it teaches and demands a proper use of them.
My dear friends! Islam only means an untainted faith in Allah, and the good deeds that go with this faith. It is action, not inaction. It is accepting responsibility and not avoiding it. It is fulfilling one's obligations, not running away from them. These obligations and duties have been very clearly defined and fully illustrated in the life history of your Prophet and that of his worthy companions and disciples. A Quranic verse shows us a clear picture of that:

Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are hard on the disbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down in Rukūh, prostrating themselves in Sajdah, seeking grace from Allah, and (His) good pleasure… (Chp.48:Vrs.29)

Those who truly believe in the holy Prophet's Message follow his example and their life style reflects the sincerity and strength of their faith. While in constant strife against the powers of evil, against those who reject the truth, they are extremely compassionate and kind to each other. They are closely knit into the brotherhood of faith. They bow their heads in all humility in Prayer to Almighty Allah, seeking His Grace and Pleasure. The Quranic term meaning "His Grace" here denotes their livelihood. So they do not neglect their worldly needs and duties while striving for spiritual excellence. However, the worldly affairs cannot become a hindrance in their awareness and remembrance of Allah. About such men the holy Quran says:

By the men whom no trade or sale makes neglectful of the remembrance of Allah… (Chp.24:Vrs.37)

The demands of worldly life and the needs olthe soul, both are evenly balanced in their living. They do not seek one at the expense of the other. An example from early Muslim history illustrates the way of life of those early Muslims and the companions of the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). During their strife against the Romans, their commander sent some spies to the Muslim camp to find out the condition of the Muslim army which included the holy Prophet's worthy companions (May Allah be pleased with them). They were greatly impressed by the Muslim soldiers. They went back and reported about them in these words: "At night, they (worship) like monks, and during the day they fight like knights." This truly reflects the Islamic way of life.

Gentlemen! Today was the last day of this series of lectures. It was my intention to try to bring into locus all aspects of the life and the message of Allah's last Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). But even after eight Speeches I feel that a lot more has yet to be said. I also feel that I have said a lot and yet have not been able to say enough.

In conclusion, we say that Allah be praised, The Lord of the worlds.